

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1996

cash box international

The Independent Magazine for the Family Entertainment & Amusement Machine Industries
Print Post Approved #PP 245358/00005

magazine
and
Family Fun Int'l

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Super Hot Driver
from **KONAMI**



MERIT INDUSTRIES, INC.

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Merit Industries is dedicated to the success of the pub operator. We are seeking to establish distributor relationships with companies who share our viewpoint that a strong operator is the backbone of our businesses.

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Bensalem, PA (USA)

Inside this month...



VIDEO GAMES

Over the next few months you're going to see more big polygon games than ever before put into the market and this feature looks at some of them, plus the views of players, operators and manufacturers on the industry

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LATE NEWS

NINTENDO NOT CONTENT TO HAVE THE SUPERIOR PRODUCT, THEY WANT TO KICK BUTT.

Nintendo are due to hit the USA, the worlds biggest single consumer market, on the 30th of this month with their new 64 bit System and an incredible game titled, Super Mario 64. Their system was to be priced at \$249 in the US after Sega and Sony cut their prices by \$100 to \$199, but just as we go to press, Nintendo have "got a rocket" from their shareholders for only earning a lazy \$300 million or so this past year, and have announced that they will also be in the market at \$199.....and they will be in there with a product that's far superior to either Sega or Sony.

CBI believes that this coming war in the consumer market could

have serious repercussions in coin-op, particularly for Sega



BRASIL'S SALEX TAKES UP A POSITION IN THE TOP BRACKET OF TRADE SHOWS

A very successful SALEX '96, held in late July in Sao Paulo, has established the big South American exhibition as one of the most important shows in the world, and also shown South America to now be a strong and quite mature market that can only improve even more in coming years.

Visitors were not only impressed with the strength of the market, but also with the general attitude of operators, to wards this industry. Most found the trip to Brasil both profitable and encouraging.



ASIA & THE SUB CONTINENT

INDIA: The interest from manufacturers and distributors in India's two introductory amusement industry events, Gerry Robinson's (TSI Ltd) "Leisure India" in Mumbai, December 10th -11th and the AAMA/IAAPA sponsored show in New Delhi in February, has outstripped both organisers expectations by a wide margin and with space being limited, those wishing to participate at either or both events should move quickly to secure a position.

TAIWAN: Most of Taiwans licensed arcades have now re-opened, but many hundreds of smaller, unlicensed establishments remain closed, and Taipai's Mayor Chen has vowed to close the whole shebang down for good if there is any sign of illegal operations or the bribing of police that was going on before the April closure that revealed corruption on a large scale in the industry in Taiwan and resulted in 89 police officers being accused of taking over \$US 800,000 in bribes from amusement arcade operators. (*More detail inside*)

EUROPE & THE UK

- European companies, Gaelco of Spain with their very good looking, CG3D driving game 'Speed Up', and CineMotion of the UK with their 'CyberMotion' interactive game seat, are breaking new ground in taking their products to Japan's AM Show this month, both companies are confident of good sales.
- The European Showmen's Union (ESU) - which has a membership of over 105,000 representing showmen throughout continental Europe - will be holding its Presidential Congress at the 1997 Amusement Trades Exhibition International.

The Congress, which will take place in Thursday January 23, will be the focal point for a four day gathering comprising all of the leading figures in the European showmen's movement. Included in the programme is an address from a leading political figure from the European Union, informal discussions with sister trade associations, an international reception and a tour of ATEI. A total of 120 delegates from the ESU are expected to attend.

SOUTH AFRICA

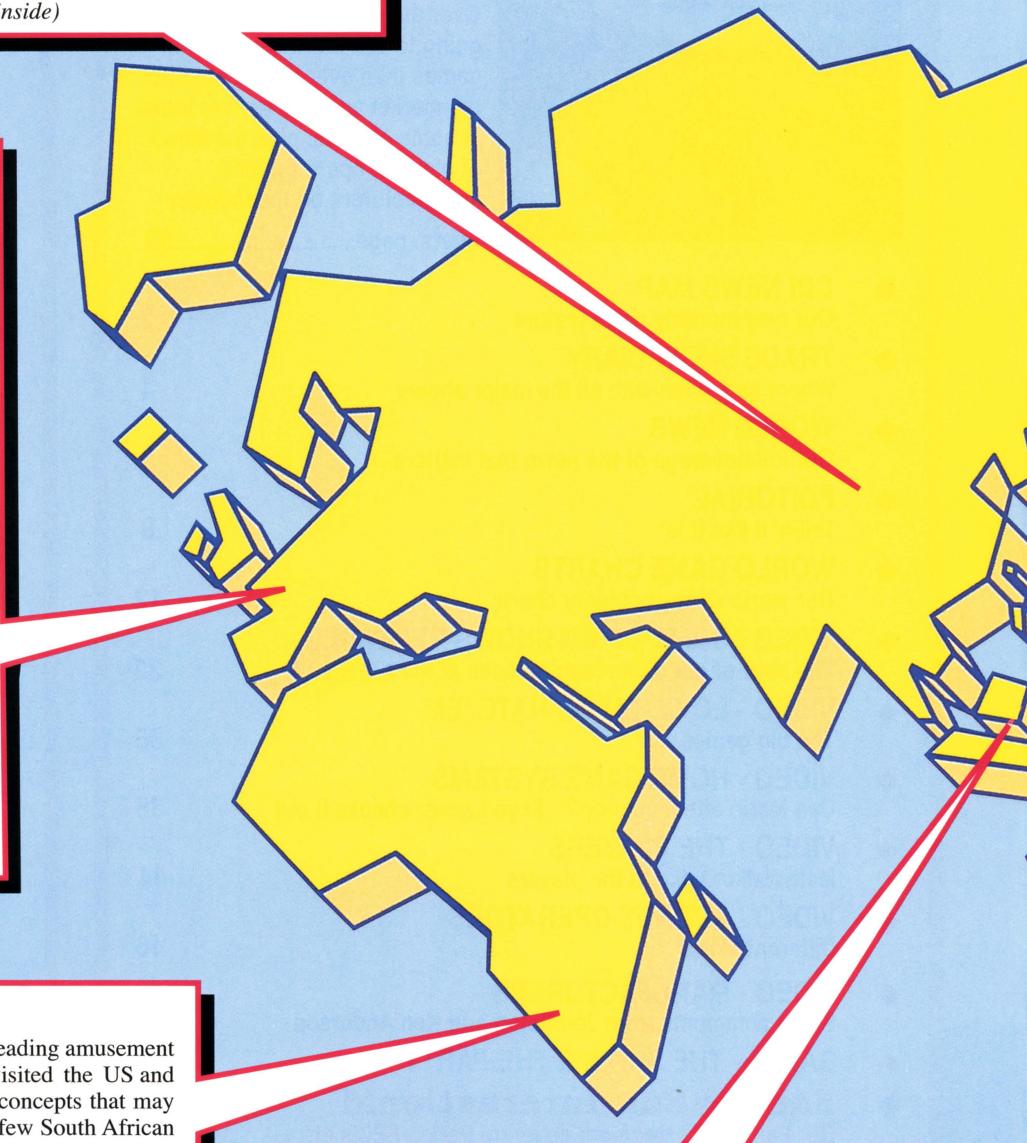
- A four man team from Johannesburg's leading amusement game operators "The Magic Company" visited the US and Australia recently checking on trends and concepts that may be adaptable to South Africa. One of the few South African company's that's not busting their gut trying to get into gaming, The Magic Company are quite content to operate the amusement games in the better casinos.

Gavin Rimmer of The Magic Co has agreed to act as CBI's correspondent on amusement games in South Africa, Phone: +27 11 837 7900, Fax: +27 11 837 3777

- Even South Africans are surprised at the attention they are getting in some sections of the trade press as a "huge emerging market". With a population of around 40 million, and only about 20% of that number (8 million odd) with disposable income, most South Africans see their market as relatively small

- The provinces that have addressed the operation of slot machines outside casinos have limited both the numbers that operators can be licensed for, and the locations where such machines can be operated, which at this time are only racetracks and bingo halls.

cash box



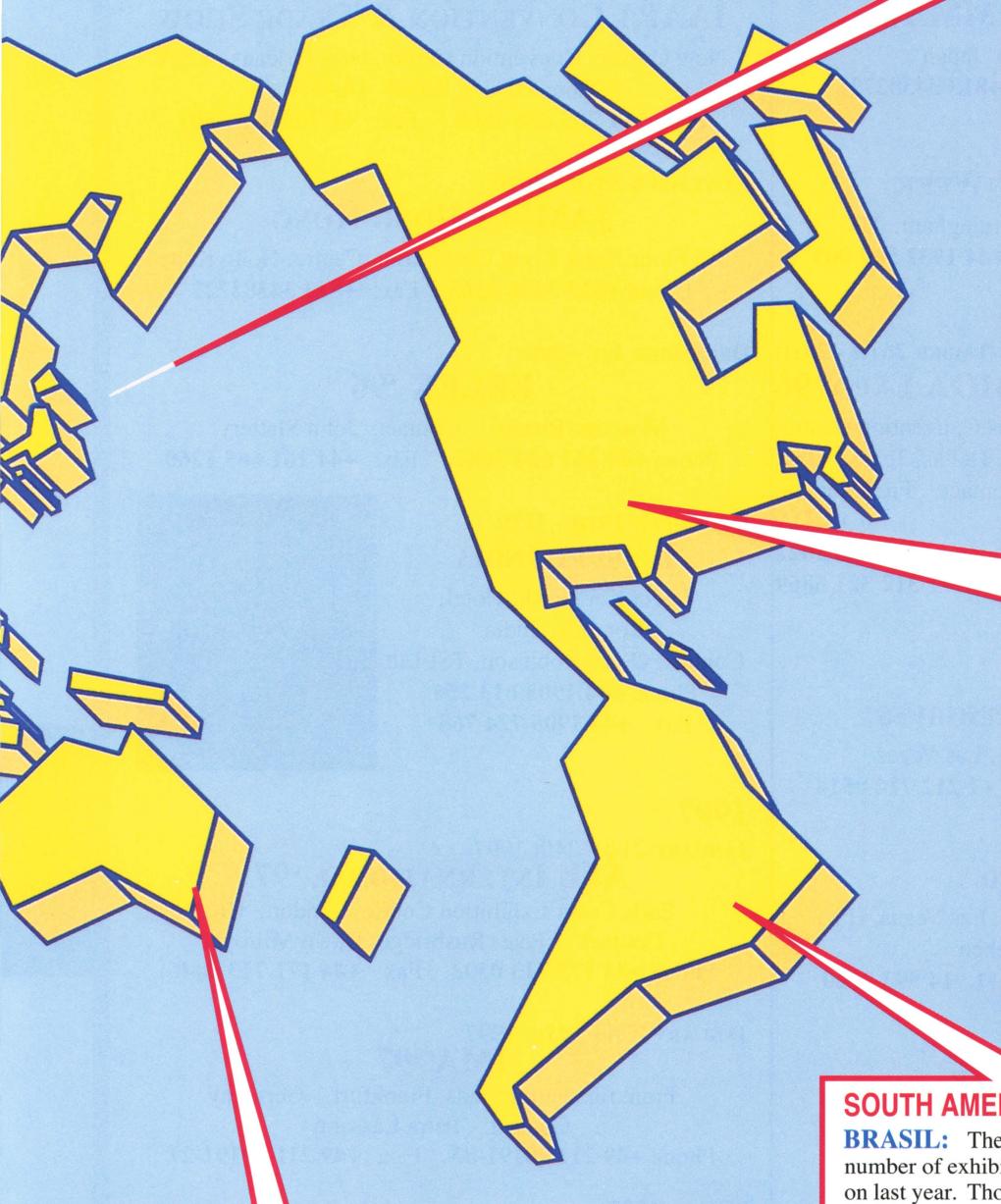
SOUTH EAST ASIA

Asian Amusement Expo Show Committee Chairman, Ron Carrara, has announced that the 1997 Asian Amusement Expo will be held in Singapore, June 11-12, 1997, at the Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The idea of holding the Asian Amusement Expo on a Hong Kong - Singapore rotation drew a strong response in a survey sent to exhibitors, visitors and IAAPA members after the 1996 Hong Kong show. Mr Carrara said that "Singapore's strategic location serves as a springboard to neighbouring markets that will allow us to broaden the scope of attendances at the 1997 event and build on our past success in Hong Kong".

IAAPA Executive Director John Graff said that, "We are excited about the opportunities Singapore as a venue can offer to our members and participants. Singapore is one of the leading growth markets for amusements products in the development of the amusement industry in South East Asia ."

international NewsMap



AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

- Leisure & Allied Industries, the country's largest operator, (and self styled leader) have further alienated themselves from the general industry with their decision to resign from the National AMOA and the NSW AMOA after being stung by the intensity of the National Association's defence of the current legal proceedings over exclusive distribution, and criticised for their attack on NSW hotel sites held by independent operators, by the NSW AMOA.
- Being hit hard with very high prices on most good games and products which are traded under "exclusive distribution" New Zealand operators are reportedly looking at avenues for a legal challenge.

JAPAN

Tokyo's AM Show is all set to go early this month, but with the continuing slump in arcade revenue and most operators having now seen the shape of things to come in the home game market through the release of Nintendo's System 64 and a magnificent *Super Mario* game, industry confidence is generally at a pretty low ebb.

- There's speculation in Japan that the Nakayama reign of the under-performing Sega is just about over as reports of a Board meeting where he was reportedly told to "Stop stuffing around and start making some money" circulate freely.

UNITED STATES

- The Pinball situation remains grim with Williams/Bally still apparently showing losses on the Pinball side of their business even after laying off a number of staff and cutting down on manufacture.

Meanwhile Sega Pinball and Capcom Pinball have agreed in principle to merge their respective Pinball manufacturing and marketing operations, but there's still a long way to go before any deal is finalised.

- Premier Technology is tipped to live on under new ownership following a bulk sale of the company's assets to a company called Gottlieb Developments LLC, of Pelham Manor NY, who state their intention is to initially supply parts for the Premier/Gottlieb machines currently in the market while seeking investors to finance a re-entry to Pinball manufacture, probably in the second half of next year.

- Florida's Benchmark Entertainment are the latest of the American manufacturers to open a Web site on Internet, check: <http://www.IGC.net/~benchmrk>

- The stagnant US market and falling operator attendance and number of exhibitors that's been seen at the major US shows in recent years, marks the AMOA Expo '96 to open on the 26th of this month in Dallas, Texas, as one of the most important events ever held for the amusement industry in the USA.

SOUTH AMERICA

BRASIL: The big SALEX Show closed with attendance, number of exhibitors and sales all showing a healthy increase on last year. Though all exhibits attracted a lot of interest, the pieces that got the most attention at the show were Konami's new video simulator, "Wave Shark", the SNK "Neo Mini" cranes and for an entirely different reason, the display by Rio de Janeiro's Game House, of Nintendo's new 64 bit home game system and the brilliant "*Super Mario*" game.

Having just about outgrown the huge Mart Centre in Sao Paulo where the show has been held since it's inception, SALEX organisers, Worlds Fair Exhibitions and Roberto Selles are checking out a new venue for 1997.

CHILE: Esteban Geyger Mailath of Geyger Malaith Ltda, and President of the Chilean operators association will in future act as Cash Box Int'l correspondent and representative in that country. Phone: 641 8520, Fax 641 8280.

TRADE SHOW DIARY 1996

SEPTEMBER 1ST - 3RD

AUSTRALASIAN GAMING EXPO '96

Darling Harbour Exhibition Centre, Sydney, Australia
Contact: Exhibition Management Pty Ltd
Phone +613 9646 4044 Fax: +613 9646 1828

SEPTEMBER 12TH - 14TH

AM SHOW '96 (JAMMA)

Makuhari Messe, Tokyo Japan
Phone +813 3438 2363 Fax: +813 34382721

SEPTEMBER 24TH - 26TH

LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. UK
Phone +44 1932 564 455 Fax: +44 1932 560 009



OCTOBER 1ST - 3RD

WORLD GAMING CONGRESS

Las Vegas convention centre, Las Vegas
Phone +1 212 594 4120 Fax: +1 212 714 0514

OCTOBER 10TH - 12TH

FUN EXPO '96

Sands Expo & Convention Centre, Las Vegas. USA
Contact: Bailey Beeken
Phone +1 914 993 9200 Fax: +1 914 993 9210

OCTOBER 10TH - 11TH

FER - INTERAZAR

Madrid, Spain Contact: William Antonio Ingles
Phone +34 1 445 3702 Fax: +34 1 594 3005

OCTOBER 19TH - 21ST

WORLD WATERPARK SYMPOSIUM, ETC.

Florida, USA Contact: Statia Leeds
Phone +1 913 599 0300 Fax: 1 913 599 0520

OCTOBER 30TH - NOVEMBER 1ST

GAMEX '96

Johannesburg, South Africa
Contact: John Slattery
Phone +44 161 624 3687 Fax: +44 161 665 1260

NOVEMBER 5TH - 9TH

AUSTRALASIA'S AMUSEMENT EXPO '96

Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland. Australia
Contact: AMOAQ
Phone +617 3841 1021 Fax: +617 3841 1332

NOVEMBER 19TH - 23RD

IAAPA CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

New Orleans Convention Centre, New Orleans. USA
Contact: Joe Rubel IAAPA
Phone +1 703 836 4800 Fax: +1 703 836 4801

NOVEMBER 28TH - 30TH

JAMMA HONG KONG

7th Floor Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong
Phone +813 3438 2363 Fax: +813 34382721

DECEMBER 1ST - 3RD

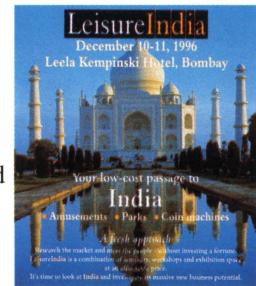
EELEX '96

Moscow, Russia Contact: John Slattery
Phone +44 161 624 3687 Fax: +44 161 665 1260

DECEMBER 10TH - 11TH

LEISURE INDIA

Leela Kempinski Hotel,
Bombay. India
Contact: Gerry Robinson, TSI Ltd
Phone +44 1905 613 256
Fax: +44 1905 724 768



1997

JANUARY 21st - 24th 1997

ATE INTERNATIONAL '97

Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London. UK
Contact: Peter Rusbridge, Dawn Milroy
Phone +44 171 713 0302 Fax: +44 171 713 0446

JANUARY 22nd - 25th 1997

IMA '97

Frankfurt Fairgrounds, Frankfurt. Germany
Contact: Petra Lassahn
Phone +49 211 90191-83 Fax: +49 211 90191-27

MARCH 1997

AMUSEMENT SHOWCASE INTERNATIONAL

(Formerly ACME) Sands Convention Centre, Las Vegas
Contact: William T Glasgow Inc
Phone +1 708 333 9292 Fax: +1 708 333 4086

APRIL 23RD - 24TH

AMUSEMENT LEISURE EXHIBITION '97

Winter Gardens, Blackpool. UK
Contact: John Slattery
Phone +44 161 624 3687 Fax: +44 161 665 1260



Sonic is going to have his work cut out with the Nintendo 64 DD System which also comes with a new Analog joystick and ports for four players

Brasil

KONAMI'S "WAVE SHARK" HAS GREAT OPENING AT SALEX

Showing the increasing importance of the big South American Trade show, SALEX, which was held in Sao Paulo, recently, Konami chose Brasil to exhibit the production model of their Jet Ski simulator, *Wave Shark*, for the first time.

And what a debut it was with players lining up constantly throughout the three day event to get a ride on one of the four linked games that were set up in the centre of the main hall.



Konami have done a lot of work on the game that was first seen in prototype form at the AOU in Japan earlier this year and then at ACME, the graphics are excellent, it has had extra courses added, including a beginners course that gives the player the feel of the game, has been speeded up to where it's now very quick, and has had linking facilities installed which turn the game into a fast moving, competitive, fun experience that, going on the obvious enjoyment and 'body language' of players in Brasil, could well make it a really big winner for the Japanese company.

Japan

MARIO SET TO SHAKE THE LIFE OUT OF SEGA AND SONY IN HOME VIDEO GAME MARKET

There's been a few missed release dates and other setbacks along the way which competitors have used to their advantage in 'rubbishing' Nintendo's new 64 bit home game system, but now that the 'beast' has finally been put into the market, Sega and Sony, Nintendo's main competitors have been notably very quiet.

In fact they give every indication of being as awestruck of the Nintendo system and the brilliant new Mario game that has

been made for it, as players all around the world who have been fortunate enough to see or play it, are.

The new Mario game, *Super Mario 64* took more than two years for Shigeru Miyamoto, Nintendo's brilliant game maker, to develop, and it's a true masterpiece, a game that we believe can genuinely lay claim to being the finest video game ever made.

Readers are entitled to think that we at CBI have

"lost another plot" by saying a home game about a comic plumber could be classed as a better game than say, Daytona, but wait till you see this one, no words that we know can depict how brilliant *Super Mario 64* is.

There's no doubt at all that Nintendo, with Mario and the 64 bit system are going to kick some serious ass in the home game market, and the war for market supremacy, a war of extremely high stakes, which we forecast more than a year ago, is now underway.

Flush with cash and this incredible new product, Nintendo are preparing to spend \$50 million on advertising, and because of the priceless word of mouth advertising and media coverage the new system is going to get, Sony and Sega will probably have to spend double that, just to stay in the game.

How all this will affect coin-op is as yet unknown, but it's highly unlikely that a marketing war that will milk hundreds of millions of dollars out of the video game industry in advertising home games, can do anything good for coin-op.

Look out for some fireworks and at least one major casualty.



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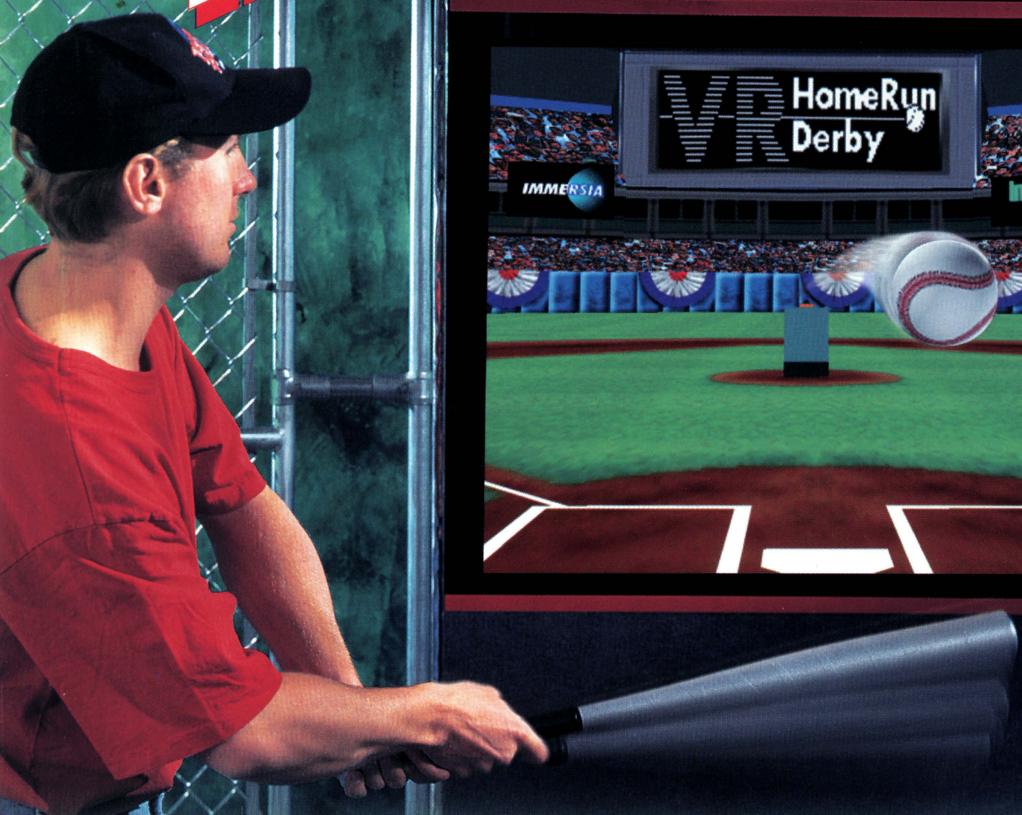
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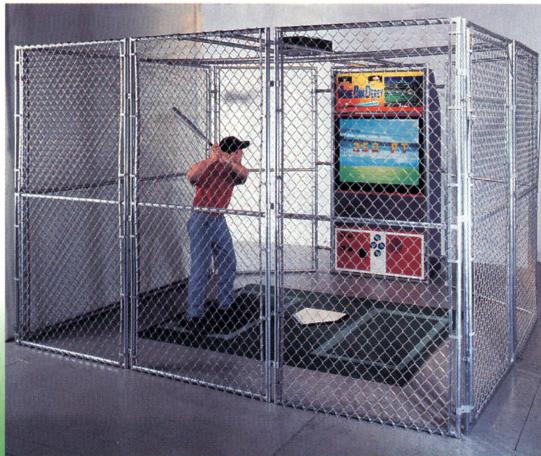
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- Experience the feeling of real pitched balls—fast ball, slider, curveball or change-up.
- Amazing visual animation and sound effects.
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Frank Ash, Pres. & CEO, Entertainment Management Services, Inc.

"TON OF MONEY"

"Home Run Derby is going to be around a long, long time and will make a ton of money."

Brian Mihalek, Amusement Manager, Dave&Busters - Philadelphia

"20% MORE BUSINESS"

"Home Run Derby is a deciding factor in families coming to my location, as evidenced by a 20% increase since the game arrived."

Kenny Grant, President, Gino's Pizza

"LOTS OF EXCITEMENT"

"Home Run Derby is on the leading edge, it has created a lot of excitement for us."

Tom Carrell, G.M., Time Out on the Court, Cincinnati, OH.

"I JUST ORDERED ANOTHER"

"Home Run Derby has been #1 in collections for us. Home Run Derby's got it! I just ordered another."

Fred Healy, Pres., Mall Entertainment Corporation, Montoursville, PA.

"ABOVE THE COMPETITION"

"Home Run Derby week after week is above the competition in earnings."

Don Berkeley, G.M., Blockbuster Golf and Games

WEEKLY EARNINGS REPORT

DAVE AND BUSTERS – PHILADELPHIA, PA.

| | |
|--------|-------------|
| WEEK 1 | 4000 TOKENS |
| WEEK 2 | 4050 TOKENS |
| WEEK 3 | 6435 TOKENS |
| WEEK 4 | 6122 TOKENS |
| WEEK 5 | 7271 TOKENS |
| WEEK 6 | 7034 TOKENS |

BLOCKBUSTER GOLF AND GAMES – FT. LAUDERDALE, FL.

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| WEEK OF 7/8 – | \$1,785 |
| WEEK OF 7/15 – | \$1,585 |

A POPULAR FEC – CINCINNATI, OH.

| | |
|--------|---------|
| WEEK 1 | \$ 818 |
| WEEK 2 | \$1,347 |
| WEEK 3 | \$1,122 |
| WEEK 4 | \$1,001 |
| WEEK 5 | \$1,457 |

Come join the Home Run Derby Hit Parade!



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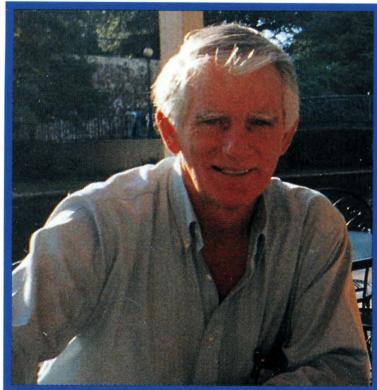
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Tellin' It Like It Is With Jack Rodios

It's not much good saying something is white when it's black and though we are not into "doom & gloom" at Cash Box generally, we have to face up to the fact that several sectors of the coin-op amusement game industry have problems that are not going to simply disappear over night.

Pinball is obviously the worst case, sinking to just about an all time low all round the

world, but with relatively poor returns from expensive video games in most markets, video is not all that far behind the ailing silver ball, and redemption revenue is also down in its former stronghold, the USA.

We appear to be suffering a huge "hangover" from a great binge which included the very quick expansion in FEC establishment, acceptance of the huge price increases to operators that have come with the switch from predominately convertible video games to big, expensive dedicated machines, and a general attitude, induced by the Sega type companies of this world, that as long as operators keep buying these big machines everything will be all right.

But just like everything else, 'hangovers' have to be paid for, mainly by way of pain.

The average bloke knows instinctively when he slowly opens his eyes after a big night out, and realises that there's someone holding a mirror up to his mouth to see if he's still breathing that (a) he's seen better days, (b) he shouldn't have had those few extra jugs, and (c) that no matter what way he wants to look at it, he's in pretty bad shape.

But a lot of operators, distributors, and manufacturers that have undergone the "mirror test" have not got the message that goes with it, they are wringing their hands with tales of woe, blaming anything and everything in sight for their troubles, while carefully avoiding acceptance of any responsibility for the state the industry is in, and generally just hoping all the bad stuff will go away.

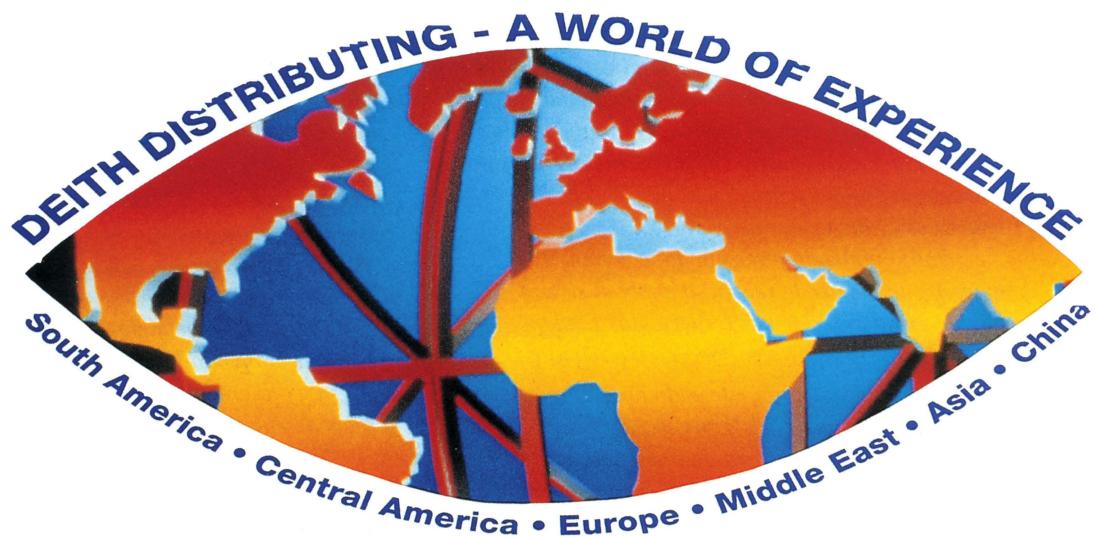
The way I see it, two things have to be fully realised before this industry can get back on the rails of real profit. We have to accept a lot of the responsibility, acceding that we've probably all played a part of some sort in bringing coin-op down, and we have to understand that all this pain is not simply going to go away with the result being a magical return to the glory days.

There are challenges ahead for coin-op that will be impossible to ignore, things like even higher prices than what we now think are far too high, a little plumber named Mario that Nintendo have tossed into the pot, and increasing competition from other forms of entertainment, just to name a few.

How we respond to these challenges will determine our immediate futureand possibly the future of coin-op

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NAMCO = Aqua Jet
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NAMCO = Time Crisis
SEGA = Gunblade NY
SEGA = Lost Bronx
SEGA = Touring Cars
SEGA = Virtua Fighter 3
SEGA = Wave Runner

PINBALLS

BALLY = Safe Cracker
SEGA = Independence Day
WILLIAMS = Arabian Nights

JUKEBOXES

NSM = Digital Thunder
ROWE = LaserStar Venus
WURLITZER = One More Time

REDEMPTION

BROMLEY Colorama
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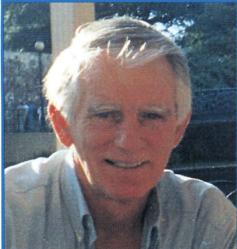
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Fax: 516-621-1238

E-MAIL: deith@deithdist.com

AMOA
Amusement & Music Operators Association

INTERNET: <http://www.deithdist.com>



No sirve mucho decir que algo es blanco cuando es negro y a pesar de que nosotros en Cash Box generalmente no estamos "tristes y desalentados", debemos enfrentarnos con el hecho de que hay varios sectores de la industria de juegos de entretenimientos operados con fichas que tienen problemas que no van a desaparecer por si solos, durante la noche.

Los Flippers, sin duda alguna, son el caso más duro, hundiéndose a su nivel más bajo de todos los tiempos, en todo el mundo, pero también tienen ingresos relativamente bastante pobres los video juegos más caros en la mayoría de los mercados; y los videos no están tan lejos de la pelotita plateada preocupada, así como los ingresos de juegos de recuperación también se han reducido en su anterior plaza fuerte, los Estados Unidos.

Aparentemente estamos sufriendo un giro y fabricantes han pasado por "la prueba del espejo" sin recibir el mensaje que está incorporado, están apretando sus manos con fábulas de infierno, culpando a todo y a cada cosa frente a sus problemas, mientras evitan cuidadosamente aceptar cualquier tipo de responsabilidad propia

Contando lo como es, por Jack Rodos

por el estado actual de su industria, y en general solamente esperando que los materiales nocivos se vayan por sí solos.

Como yo lo veo, dos cosas deben ser tenidas totalmente en cuenta antes de que ésta industria pueda regresar al camino del verdadero ingreso. Debemos aceptar que mucha de la responsabilidad nos compete, aceptando que probablemente todos tomamos parte de alguna forma, en la baja que sufre la industria de máquinas operadas con fichas, y debemos comprender que, todo éste dolor, no se va a ir simplemente porque sí, regresando mágicamente a los días de gloria.

Tenemos desafíos de la industria de máquinas operadas con fichas, frente a nosotros que serán imposibles ignorar, cosas como incluso futuros precios más altos que los que ya pensamos que son demasiado excesivos, un pequeño plomero llamado

Mario que Nintendo ha arrojado dentro de la caldera, y la creciente competencia de otras formas de entretenimiento, simplemente para nombrar algunos elementos.

Como respondamos nosotros a estos desafíos determinará nuestro futuro inmediato y posiblemente el futuro de la industria de máquinas operadas con fichas.

CB NEWS

Following quickly on the heels of their top class Jet ski simulator, Wave Shark, Konami have released a new driving game titled Winding Heat (pictured at right) that also has the tongues wagging.

The game uses the company's own polygon graphics system and is being described in some quarters as a daylight version of their quite successful Midnight Run.

Winding Heat does have a lot of similarities to Midnight Run, but describing it this way does the game an injustice as there is a lot more to it than that, apart from vastly improved graphics, it has a lot more variation in courses, appears considerably quicker, has more selectable car options, and it has "tested the house down" in Japan and the USA.



SEGA TOURER

Sega are ready to release a new driving game at the AM Show this month that's titled Touring Car Championships, it's themed on European style touring car racing and is a sort of Rally Champ on road tracks.

The game is on the existing Model 2 CGI system, probably the last of the breed, and comes in a twin cockpit model.

New Drivers

KONAMI PUT NEW DRIVER INTO MARKET • GAELOCO TAKE SPEED UP INTO LIONS DEN • SEGA SET WITH TOURING CAR GAME • JALECO'S SUPER GT OPENS WELL

GAELOCO TAKE SPEED UP TO JAPAN

Spanish gamemaker Gaelco are taking their very good looking polygon driver, Speed Up, into the heart of 'enemy' territory this month when they exhibit the game at Tokyo's AM Show.

The company are very confident their game can match the Japanese games and going on the earnings it has generated in its test programme, it appears they have good reason for that confidence. The company will also show the game at the AMOA Expo in Dallas.

SUPER GT 24 HOURS

Jaleco's Super GT 24 Hours (picture at right) is another good looking polygon driver and it

has produced a top performance in its early days in the market.

Very quick with extremely good handling, Super GT looks good and plays good, with most who have seen it agreeing that it's right up there with the best of them in quality and probably the best thing Jaleco have ever done.



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Cash Box International GAME RATINGS

REDEMPTION GAMES



Cyclone
No 1 Redemption Game
September, 1996

ROLL DOWNS

- 1 Spin to Win
- 2 Twenty One
- 3 Clown Rolldown
- 4 Spin-A-21
- 5 Rolldown

SPORTS GAMES

- 1 Super Shot D/x
- 2 Full Court Frenzy II
- 3 Rage in the Cage
- 4 Shoot to Win II
- 5 Two Minute Drill
- 6 UBQB II
- 7 Penalty Shoot Out
- 8 Full Court Fever

SHOOTING GAMES

- 1 Ghostown
- 2 Water Race
- 3 Big Mouth
- 4 Six Gun Saloon

VIDEO

- 1 Solar Spin
- 2 Mouse Attack
- 3 The Dealer
- 4 Double Cheese
- 5 Pop-a-Ball

WHACKERS

- 1 Ribbit Racin'
- 2 Wacky Gator
- 3 Spider Splattin'
- 4 Cracky Crab

ALLEY BOWLERS

- 1 Skee Ball Too
- 2 ICE Ball
- 3 Pro Striker
- 4 Smart Ball

BALL TOSS

- 1 Simple Simon
- 2 Ring Toss
- 3 Skee Toss BC
- 4 Magic Mr X

COIN PUSHERS

- 1 Jungle Jive
- 2 Klondike
- 3 Dino Valley
- 4 Starburst

COIN SHOOTERS

- 1 Dinoscore
- 2 Dinoworld
- 3 Flip'n Win
- 4 Turf Wars

COIN ROLLDOWNS

- 1 Smokin' Token
- 2 Camelot
- 3 Home Run Hitter
- 4 Chicken Dash
- 5 Pharaoh's Phantasy

CRANES

- 1 Neo Carnival
- 2 Space Crane
- 3 Watch/Gift Box
- 4 Snack Attacker

KIDS GAMES

- 1 Mini Dunxx
- 2 Shoot to Win Junior
- 3 Buddy Bear
- 4 Li'l Dump the Ump

NOVELTIES

- 1 Cyclone
- 2 Cyclone Jr
- 3 Spin for Tickets
- 4 Triple Play
- 5 Colorama
- 6 Swamp Stomp

ENGLAND

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Street Fight. Alpha 2
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Metal Slug
- 4 Soul Edge

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Alpine Racer
- 3 Virtua Cop 2
- 4 Daytona USA

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Theatre of Magic
- 3 Arabian Nights

BRASIL

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Street Fighter Zero 2
- 3 Metal Slug
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Last Bronx

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Daytona USA
- 3 Rally Champ
- 4 Virtua Cop 2

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Mario Andretti
- 3 Theatre of Magic

SINGAPORE

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Last Bronx
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Street Fight. Zero 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Daytona USA
- 3 Gunblade NY

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Congo
- 3 Twister

Cash Box International GAME RATINGS

JAPAN

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Quiz My Angel
- 2 Die Hard
- 3 Decathlete
- 4 Last Bronx
- 5 Street Fight. Alpha 2
- 6 Virtua Fighter
- 7 Tekken 2
- 8 Virtua Striker
- 9 Powerful Proyakyu
- 10 Sup. World Stadium

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Side By Side
- 2 Prop Cycle
- 3 Alpine Surfer
- 4 Gunblade NY
- 5 Virtual On
- 6 Time Crisis
- 7 Virtua Cop 2
- 8 Rave Racer
- 9 Victory Lap
- 10 Alpine Racer

PINBALLS

- 1 Congo
- 2 Jurassic Park
- 3 Road Show
- 4 Frankenstein
- 5 Pinball Magic

HONG KONG

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 King of Fighters '96
- 2 Die Hard
- 3 Ray Storm
- 4 Last Bronx
- 5 Virtua Striker
- 6 SF Alpha 2
- 7 Decathlete

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Gunblade NY
- 2 Virtual On
- 3 Alpine Racer
- 4 Rave Racer
- 5 Time Crisis

PINBALLS

- 1 Apollo 13
- 2 Shaq Attaq
- 3 Stargate

UNITED STATES

VIDEO GAMES

- 1 Tekken 2
- 2 NBA Hang Time
- 3 Megatouch IV
- 4 Tourn. Solitaire
- 5 Soul Edge Ver 2
- 6 Metal Slug
- 7 Golden Tee 3D Golf
- 8 Run & Gun 2
- 9 Neo Turf Masters
- 10 SF Alpha 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Virtual On
- 2 Daytona USA
- 3 Cruisn' USA
- 4 Area 51
- 5 Alpine Racer
- 6 Manx TT
- 7 Virtua Cop 2
- 8 Point Blank
- 9 Cyber Cycles
- 10 Rally Champ

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Arabian Nights
- 3 Theatre of Magic
- 4 Twister
- 5 Breakshot

GUNBLADE NY



AUSTRALIA

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Street Fighter Zero 2
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Die Hard
- 4 Virtua Fighter 2
- 5 Last Bronx
- 6 Neo Turf Master
- 7 Dung'ns & Dragon 2
- 8 Soul Edge
- 9 Virtua Striker
- 10 Run & Gun 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Rally Champ
- 3 Daytona USA
- 4 Virtua Cop 2
- 5 Point Blank
- 6 Alpine Racer
- 7 Ace Driver Vic
- 8 Midnight P
- 9 Ace Driv
- 10 Cyber C

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Twister
- 3 Theatre of Magic
- 4 Goldeneye
- 5 No Fear
- 6 Congo
- 7 Apollo 13
- 8 Batman Forever
- 9 Big Hurt
- 10 Shaq Attaq

GERMANY

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Metal Slug
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Virtua Striker
- 4 Soul Edge
- 5 Turf Master

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Alpine Racer
- 2 Time Crisis
- 3 Rally Champ
- 4 Daytona USA
- 5 Dirt Dash
- 6 Cruisn' USA

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Arabian Nights
- 3 Twister
- 4 Mario Andretti

South America

JAMES INDUSTRIES TIE UP NSM



Jim Roberts of James Industries signs the agreement at SALEX. From left: Dave Drouillard (NSM), Aldo Andreau, John Margold (NSM), Jim Roberts, Jurgen Jost (NSM) and John Bluin

James Industries, the only American distributor to exhibit at Brasil's SALEX in their own right, have signed an agreement with NSM that gives them exclusive distribution of NSM products in the whole of South America.

The company have been operating under an informal agreement of this type for some time, but the arrangement was formalised in Sao Paulo to bring it into line with a similar agreement the company has for Mexico and Central America.

With Jukeboxes being one of the strongest sectors in what is a pretty strong market and James Ind. holding a highly prominent place in that market, NSM are confident of achieving very good market share in this alliance.

The full range of EMT Kiddie Rides and associated products, another great line for South America, are also included in the deal with the NSM Jukeboxes, etc.

United States

MERIT IND. ONLINE

Merit Industries, makers of the high performing Meg-a touch games and Scorpion Darts have opened an Internet site that will keep operators fully informed on the company's products, finance programs, tournaments, which also provides a direct electronic mail service for orders and/or information. Check out;

<http://www.merit.com>

United States

NAMCO RELEASE AQUA JET AND TOKYO WARS

Namco have released two new dedicated games into the market, a Jet Ski simulator titled Aqua Jet, and a big 4 player combat game titled Tokyo Wars that was first shown at ATEI early this year.

Aqua Jet is similar in many ways to Konami's Wave Shark, which is already in the market, but like several recent Namco games, it has no linking facilities at this stage.

Tokyo Wars is a game that attracted a lot of interest when shown, and is one that looks capable of achieving good results in the player market, but the decision to only release the game in a huge 4 player sit down version must surely limit its exposure.



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United States



SEGA - CAPCOM PINBALL MERGER NOT YET A "DONE DEAL"

The "on again/off again" union of the Sega and Capcom Pinball manufacturing operations is on again following an announcement that the US subsidiaries of the Japanese owned Sega Enterprises and Capcom Co have agreed in principal to the merging of the two Chicago based Pinball businesses.

In a joint statement that will have many employees of both companies wondering how much

longer they'll be drawing a paycheck the companies said;

"The intention of the merger is to cope with the current market situation as well as give the combined company a much stronger market position. Further, by combining facilities and staffs, economies of scale will foster more efficient and economical operations"

Though no details of the timing or the structure of the



merged company have been given, Cash Box has learned that if the deal goes through (note the "if") no one that's involved is expecting it to be finalised before the end of this year or even early 1997.

The "if" is what we and many others who want to see at least three Pinball manufacturers remain in the business, see as the good news in this deal, which we firmly believe is a long way from being a "done deal".

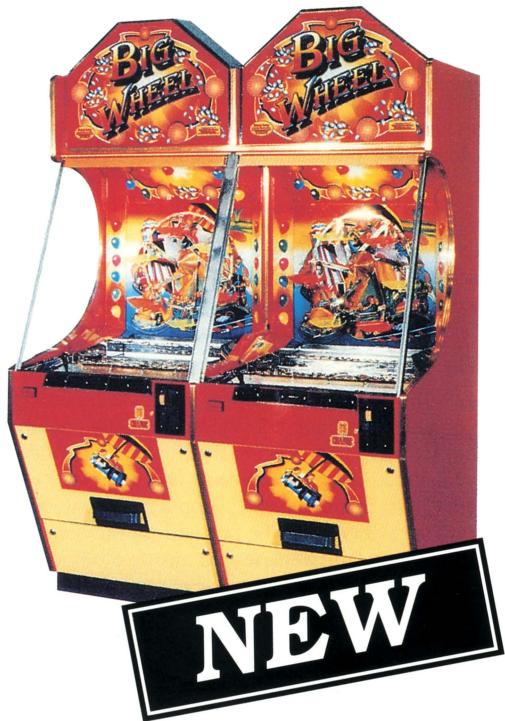
From what we hear, the problems that arose with Capcom's valuation of their Pinball operation when Sega were trying to buy them, are still there, and still have to be addressed. Sega's claim of 30% market share, and it's worth, will also be another stumbling block, and there are said to be several other major points of conflict.

We see the chance of this particular deal coming to its intended conclusion as being about 40%, at best, but the longer it drags out, the less likely it will be to happen.

On a recent visit to the Capcom facility in Chicago we saw and played a product in development that has the potential to turn Capcom Pinball into a very profitable entity in its own right whether the general Pinball market bounces back next year or not.

If the game gets the reception we feel it will at the upcoming trade shows, there's a strong chance that Mr Tsujimoto could go ahead without Sega.

BIG WHEEL



NEW

- Fire coins into car on rotating wheel to activate coin cascade onto pusher box
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- All coins played are active
- Rotating Big Wheel feature

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MEMO FROM THE MIDEAST

from Phillip D. Deighton

Marhaba! Greetings!

The Asia Pacific Theme Parks & Attractions Convention takes place next week in Singapore as I write. My speech is prepared and some of you may hear what I have to say before you read this. How unlucky can you get? However, you will know that I included in my talk reference to the many new amusement developments under consideration or construction through out Arabia, with particular hotspots in the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Israel. This is exciting and undoubtedly very good news for consultants, suppliers, manufacturers and the like. The public, too, in those locations destined for a park or FEC are sure to enjoy the facilities once opened. But sorry, I have some anxieties.

The Middle East is quite a large land mass with a

relatively small population. As regular readers of this column will know, it is also an area with distinct characteristics. It worries me that these factors are simply not being understood - or worse, ignored in the short-term race



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to the crock of gold - by the developers and their advisors alike.

As a result, we have some facilities being planned just down the road from one another.

Saturation is creeping close, not only in quantitative terms but more sadly because the amenities are all so similar. Ride parks and FECs, however they are dressed up, have a finite appeal (particularly in this part of the world) and constant re-investment will be necessary but, realistically, not forthcoming. Rapid decline in visitor numbers and closures for some are inevitable, causing damage in individual circumstances and to the Arabian amusements industry as a whole.

Ours is a creative business and this is an area rich in history and culture. We should be using all these elements to provide a variety of unique entertainment experiences pertinent to the people. It's all well and good copying something that is successful, but not to the extent that is happening here (and elsewhere, too, I know). So, come on guys, let's all be imaginative and bold and original and successful!

I'll dismount my high horse now.

December this year will see the first leisure exhibition taking place in India. This is the world's largest democracy with a population of over 900 million people, now welcoming foreign investment.

There are clear opportunities to be explored in the burgeoning leisure market of the sub-continent.

I am organising a trade mission to study the potential, take a close look at some existing facilities and learn from key players about new developments and what they offer international manufacturers, suppliers, operators and investors. The itinerary will be planned for the benefit of participating "missionaries" to ensure a tailor-made programme meets everyone's particular requirements. If you want more information and to register for the trip, please fax me on +44 1489 570 289.

The Association of Arabian Amusement Attractions is one year old in September. It has been an exciting 12 months with a great deal achieved - particular highlights include meetings in Doha and Jeddah, conference in Dubai, exhibition at New Orleans IAAPA Show, link with IAFEC, launch of the Trade Alliance and publication of the international bi-monthly, bi-lingual newsletter, Carousel.

After the summer recess, it is planning meetings for Cairo, Kuwait and Oman as well as the 3rd Gulf Leisure Parks & Fun Centre Show in Dubai next April. I will also be representing the Association at October's Fun Expo in Las Vegas. Another active year lies ahead.

The 4A's currently represents over 125 parks and family entertainment centres throughout the Middle East and has members in 26 countries worldwide. It is still growing.

Happy birthday and many happy returns!

Philip Deighton runs Deighton International, a Consultant company in Leisure & Tourism that specialises in operational management and business development. He has lived and worked in the Middle East for three years, and also runs the Association of Arabian Amusement Attractions (the 4A's). Philip is based in the UK and has an office in the Middle East, contact number, phone or fax is +44 1489 570289



EMT Play Island: A magic attraction for children.



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In Spin-To-Win, players get 3 attempts to stop the spinning hands on desired slots. Each slot is worth a certain number of tickets, bankrupt, lose a turn, or jackpot. Players can win up to 60 tickets on a single coin, but must avoid the Bankrupt slot, which will wipe out their earnings while trying to stop on the Jackpot on all three spins



SWAMP STOMP™

Players use their feet to stomp the buttons as they light up on the playfield floor to race the alligators on the backboard.

Lots of fun for 2 players against each other for one person against the game and Swamp Stomp is attractive to all ages with big ticket rewards



MINERS REVENGE™

Lazer-Tron has merged Redemption with Video to produce this exciting new shooter, Miners Revenge.

Players are hurled through a haunted mine where they must "slime" as many ghosts as they can and find secret buried treasures.

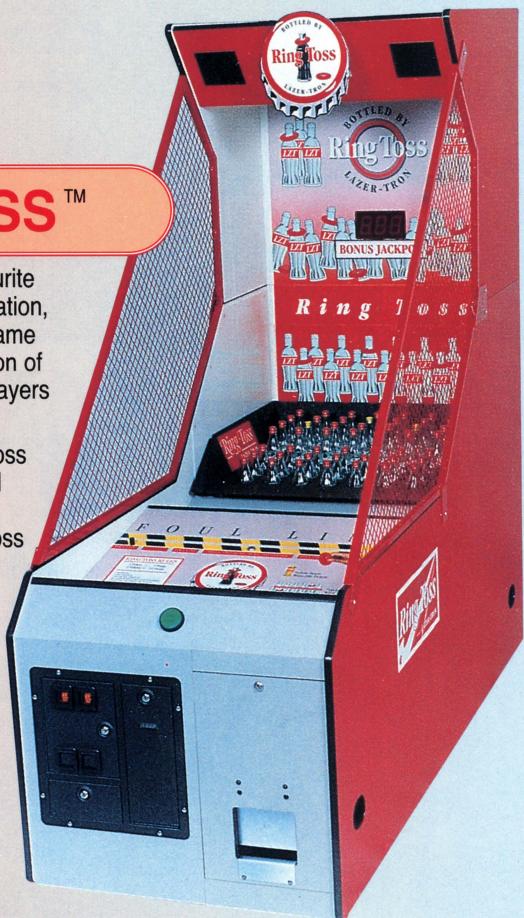
Awesome graphics, non violent family fun that can be upgraded with low cost kits.

RING TOSS™

Bringing the all-time favourite of the Midway to your location, Lazer-Tron's Ring Toss game is a fully automated version of the all time classic that players can't resist.

Players get five rings to toss over the Coke bottles and games can be linked for Super Jackpots. Ring Toss is an ideal game for all the family

And it's completely 'cheat-proof' with Lazer-Tron's patented sensor system.



SPIN-TO-WIN™

ROLLIN' FOR RICHES™



Players will be rockin' and rollin' on Lazer-Tron's new hit, roll-down game, Rollin' For Riches. Roll up to 5 balls per game to get specific numbers on the mechanical, spinning dice on the back wall. Players will try to form the best combinations to win as many tickets as possible on this exciting roll-down game.

It's a winner!



PHARAOH'S FANTASY™

WHEELIN-N-DEALIN™



Players get 3 attempts to stop the spinning hands on desired slots with each slot being worth a number of tickets.

Players can win up to 50 tickets on a single coin, but must always avoid the Bankrupt slot which will wipe out their winnings

Lazer-Tron has once again brought an all-time favourite Midway game to Redemption with this fully automated version of the classic coin-toss. Pitch-It is a sure fire winner. Players get six tokens for a quarter (adjustable) to pitch into the targets which have values of from 5 to 100 tickets. Lazer-Tron's patented OVS system detects if the coins are on targets and prevents cheating. Family fun at its best.



PIRATES GOLD™



Players try to navigate their coins through the pins into the target hole in this fast paced coin-drop game. Pirates Gold features a "play till you win" style, unique to coin-drop games



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Cash Box International Magazine Advertising

South East Asia**KERRY GROUP IN BIG AUSTRALIAN SPEND**

The very wealthy Kerry Group, Malaysia's largest operator of amusement machines, arcades and FEC's, continue to diversify in a big way with a recent spend of



\$667 million to purchase 8.5% of Australia's Coca Cola bottler, Amatil Ltd.

Robert Kuok, (pictured above) who has built the Kerry Group into one of Asia's biggest conglomerates and accumulated a \$4 billion personal fortune along the way, has spent over \$1.8 billion in the last few years buying up property

and shares in 'blue chip' Australian companies.

Though a very diversified company now, dealing in everything from commodities to construction and development, Kuok and his Kerry Group which operates out of Hong Kong, still value their amusement machine operations and other leisure businesses highly and are constantly looking for opportunities to expand them.

Malaysia**MALAYSIAN TRADE ASSOCIATION FORMED**

The Malaysian Amusement Distributors and Operators Association is in the process of being formed, with a core committee having already been elected to set up the association. The organisation sees its main role as helping to improve the amusement machine industry's image.

The next meeting is scheduled for early September when the com-

Thailand**GALAXY GROUP TO FRANCHISE AMUSEMENT CENTRES IN THAILAND**

The Galaxy Group, Thailand's major distributor and operator, have created a franchising plan for companies and investors interested in operating amusement centres in Thailand.

A team of US franchise consultants were appointed to oversee the success of the project and to date Galaxy have received more than 400 enquiries from individuals and companies eager to get into the business. The franchise fee is quite low at around

US\$5,000 but there are monthly royalty fees on turnover and, of course, all the machines have to be purchased through Galaxy.

Though some may balk at Galaxy getting a triple bite of the cherry, there are not a lot of options as Galaxy is one of the very few who know how to get equipment of all types into Thailand without getting tied up in the bureaucratic mess that others who try it, soon find themselves embroiled.

Malaysia**COUNCIL RAIDS IN SELANGOR**

It is expected that a new law will soon be passed in the Selangor region of Malaysia which will allow local municipal councils to make raids on amusement centres.

At present, only police are able to make such raids, and under the new guidelines, councils will also be given the power to fine operators by up to RM 20,000 if they are unlicensed or if they are operating illegal gaming machines.

They will also have the right to revoke an operator's license if they feel it is necessary. Our sources indicate that the new law will be in place by the end of 1996 so operators in Selangor, where illegal machines outnumber legal ones considerably, should beware!

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G SYSTEM, TAIWAN

mittee members office bearers will be formally elected. Some 27 companies, representing most of the country's major distributors and operators were present at the first meeting, including Sunway Lagoon, Sega Super Merge, Starlight Express, and KBS - Koh Boon Sing (a Singapore company)

The majority of those present were content to give the newly created organisation their support, but there have been some rumblings from smaller companies that generally find it pretty hard to work with the bigger companies. They are concerned that the new Association will end up only promoting the interests of the larger players, making it even more difficult for independent operators to compete.

**SEGA
SATELLITE
OPENS IN
KUALA LUMPUR**

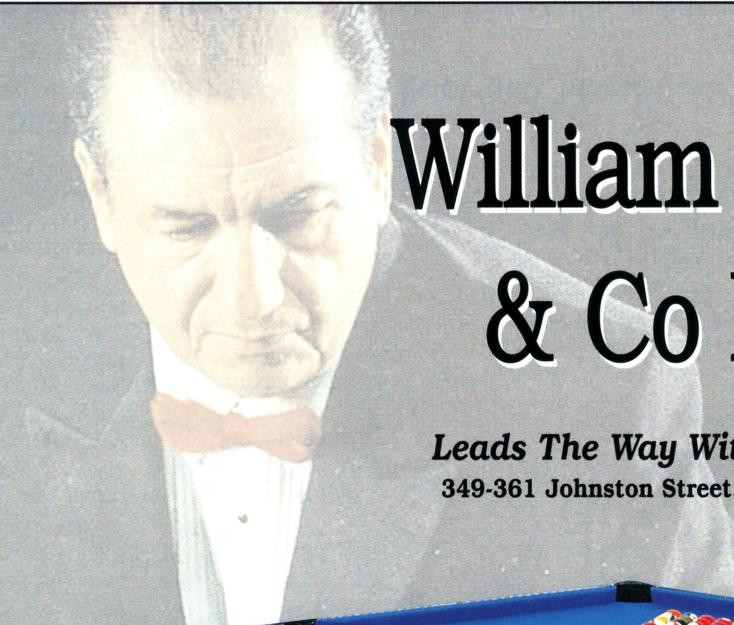
Super Merge, Sega's Malaysian distributor, have held the grand opening of their "Sega Satellite" centre at Sungai Wang Plaza Complex in Kuala Lumpur. The complex has already become one of the city's major amusement destinations, with six major operators set up there in nine arcades and all the latest games in operation.

Sega Satellite is reportedly similar in concept to Village Nine Leisure's Intencity, mixing virtual reality, games and a food service, although Sega Satellite also has Internet facilities.



There's obviously been some really heavy investment in the centre as some of the main attractions include a Mazda MX5 full scale Ridge Racer and a set of 8 Daytonas with moving seats and video cameras.

Super Merge have plans to establish three further Sega Satellite centres this year and they have a team of amusement consultants from Canada to help them create the concepts.



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United States

NEW NEON PRODUCTS FROM DOYLE TRADING

Doyle Trading Group, the new company established by industry veteran Skip Doyle, has entered into an agreement with Fallon Luminous Products to market Fallon's new lines of patented, UL Listed, neon products to several amusement and entertainment industries, worldwide.

Fallon's low voltage 12 VDC DecoNEON offers do it yourself opportunities to add ultimate neon lighting pizzaz to amusement facilities, as well as to amusement equipment. Fallon E-Glas, plate glass neon technology, now offers original equipment manufacturers the opportunity to incorporate screen printed, neon illuminated, components into amusement devices and other products. E-Glas neon signs are available in production quantities.

Doyle Trading Group can be contacted on: Phone: +1 941 358 8835 or Fax: +1 941 355 0120

Germany

NEW LOGO FOR IMA '97

There is a new logo from IMA 1997, using the year numbers as usual. It was no easy task to convert the 97 into a graphic form: the round nine had to be brought into harmony with the very rigid seven. The only way to solve the problem was to separate the numbers and have the seven encircle the nine.

"This was the origin of a logo which is not only a good reflection of the year number but also underlines the playful elements of such a colourful and technologically advanced fair such as IMA," says the show organisers.

United States

IAFEC AND UDS CREATE NEW DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT PACKAGE

The International Association of Family Entertainment Centres (IAFEC) and Urban Decision Systems (UDS) have put together a new Family Entertainment Package to aid family entertainment retailers in site selection and business planning.



The new 9-page report package features population, income, age and housing data and specific information is available for any area around any street intersection in America. It also includes data on consumer behaviour for leisure activities and dollars spent

on entertainment, along with a map of the market area, graphs and UDS' Executive Summary Report.

"We're delighted to be working with IAFEC and to be able to help family entertainment centres to be more successful and profitable," states UDS executive vice

president and chief operating officer Eric Cohen.

"Thousands of retailers across the country have been using our data for their site selection and marketing decisions; we look forward to adding family entertainment centres to this growing list."

IAFEC's executive director, Carol Sjolander agrees: "We know that the most professional FEC managers use this type of data on a regular basis. We are pleased to be able to make this valuable product available to all our members at a discounted price," she said.

IAFEC are the sponsors of Fun Expo, to be held next month in Las Vegas.

HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR THE WAYNE E. HESCH FOUNDATION

The AMOA is again requesting contributions to the Wayne E. Hesch Scholarship Foundation as a part of its AMOA Expo.

Since 1985, the program has provided \$1,000 scholarships to 256 worthy young students throughout the United States. These funds are raised during Expo week through fund raising ticket sales for equipment and merchandise donated by generous manufacturers and suppliers.

The AMOA's goal for this year is to raise \$40,000 and there are two ways to support the program: donate products for the raffle or buy tickets at the trade show.

Queries can be directed to Tera Siwicki at AMOA Headquarters on +1 312 644 6610, extension 3420.



Ireland

AMEX '97 NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS

AmEx '97, the 18th Irish Amusement Trade Exhibition will be held at the Doyle Green Isle Hotel, Dublin on March 4 & 5, 1997.

Now that the Blackpool exhibition has moved from February to the end of April, AmEx will now be the first exhibition in the region after ATEI and IMA. AmEx is

Ireland's only amusement trade exhibition and has brought together the country's manufacturers, distributors and operators annually for the past 18 years.

Around 80% of the exhibition space has already been booked by 1996 exhibitors and the allocation of stands is now taking place. Those interested in exhibiting should contact the organisers on +353 45 521 190 or Fax +353 45 521 198.



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United States

VALLEY INTERNATIONAL FOOSBALL TAKES OFF!

Hold onto your grips, the Valley International Foosball Association is about to take off. VIFA is an Association of coin machine operators, foosball table manufacturers and foosball players, working together to increase the interest in the game.

Valley Recreation, the principal organisers believe the VIFA will in time, emulate the very successful VNEA (Pool) that they initially established before handing over to an independent controlling body.

The new association will provide all the league materials required for members to encourage foosball players to form leagues and play in a weekly competition on their tables. Players in the VIFA competitions will receive:

- Personalised membership card
- Official VIFA Player Sanction Pin
- Four directly mailed magazines... Foosball Fun & Facts
- National Awards Program
- VIFA Hall of Fame Creation
- Standardised Set of Rules
- Handicapping System
- VIFA International Champ's eligibility
- Official Referee Certification
- Well organised Junior Division
- Wide variety of VIFA Apparel.



United States

NEW BILLIARD SHOW (BEPE) BOWS

The new Billiard & Entertainment Products Expo - the BEPE show, will be held at the Tarrant County Convention Centre in Fort Worth, Texas, May 1-3, 1997.

More than 200 American and foreign companies will occupy 750 exhibit spaces at the new show. In addition to commercial and residential billiard/pool tables and related products, a wide range of home recreation products displayed will include home bars/bar stools, darts, jukeboxes, gaming devices, foosball and other game tables.

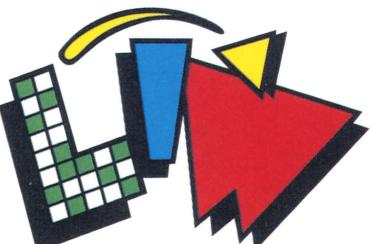
United Kingdom

LIW '96 TURNS TO SPY CAMERAS

The next generation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, based on miniature cameras will be shown at Leisure Industry Week '96 (LIW) from September 24th to 26th in Birmingham, UK. The new technology borrows from James Bond and is a departure from more visible surveillance cameras.

In some cases, banks of visible cameras scanning sites can be intimidating for customers so miniature, hidden camera are a possible alternative. Wright Security will be showcasing tiny camera and a "montage multiplexer" (a gadget that allows you to "mosaic" the images from different cameras on one screen) at LIW '96, alongside new optical turnstiles which count people in and out of the premises.

Security specialists Securasound will also reveal credit card-sized cameras that can be hidden in clocks, mirrors, speakers or even smoke alarms. Other leisure innovations to be shown include "smart" access control systems from VGS Systems that are claimed to virtually eliminate fraud, to a form of plastic ice, from Plastic for Industry, that can be used for ice skating and ice hockey matches.


For free tickets to the show call the LIW Tickets Hotline on +44 0181 773 1313



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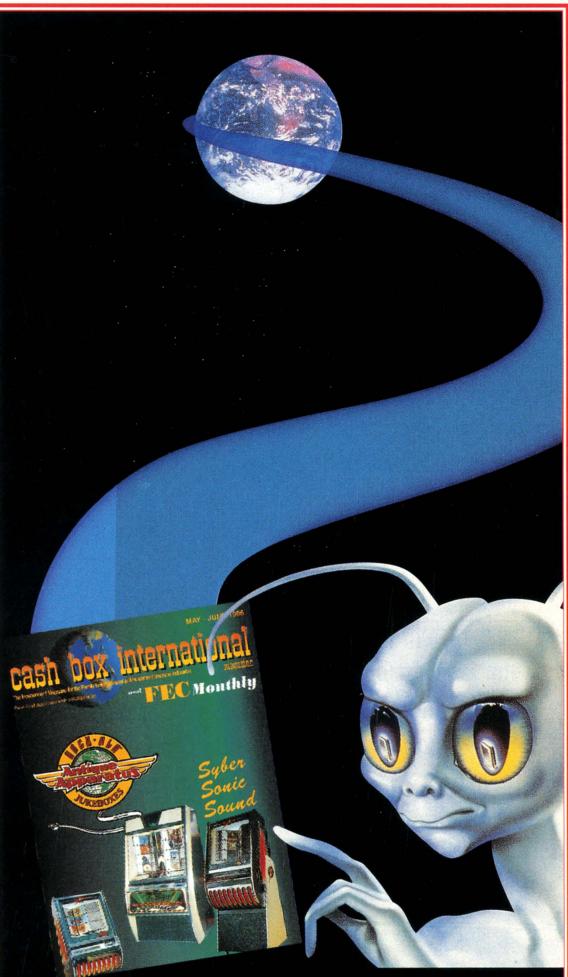
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NINTENDO 64 FOR COIN-OP

Nintendo have licensed their brilliant System 64 to Seto Co of Tokyo for use in the coin-op market and Seto intend releasing games and machines incorporating the Nintendo system as early as December this year.

It's the company's aim to offer three types of coin-op game under this license, the first is an upgraded version of Nintendo 64 using a PCB system. This system will have full CG capability and over twice the memory capacity of Sega's Titan system.

The second is a "motherboard" system which allows the cost of games to be cut in half, and the third version which will have even higher capacity is for dedicated games, with which the company believe they can produce games 10% cheaper than is possible with a conventional system.



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JAPAN

The big points of discussion in Japan are the AM Show, and if it can give coin-op a much needed kick alongNintendo and Super Mario.....and how long it will now be before Hayao Nakayama (pictured below) is ousted as chief of Sega and replaced by someone who can bring in some real profits.



We cover the AM Show in various ways on other pages and Nintendo's new 64 bit system and Mario game are also well covered, the Sega situation is a very interesting one, that we believe is just starting to unfold.

You probably won't read this anywhere else as Sega advertising is seen as a very important commodity in all areas of the media and particularly the trade press in this industry, but despite their high profile throughout the world, *Sega is seen by shareholders and financial pundits as a major under performer in the area of profit.*

On turnover of around \$US 8 billion over the past two years, the company have in real terms earned no profit. By

way of strange accounting practices they are reporting a profit of around \$US40 million this year when straight mathematics that take in their conveniently ignored \$136 million loss in Europe, show them making a \$100 million odd loss. It's easy to understand shareholders being unhappy when over the same period, Nintendo, with a similar turnover, have reported genuine profits of over half a billion dollars.

And the fact that Nintendo are about to start using their vast cash reserves to kick Sega's butt in the all important consumer market doesn't exactly give these unhappy shareholders a lot of comfort either.

The story is circulating throughout Japan that Nakayama was told in no uncertain terms at a recent Board meeting, to basically "stop the stuffing around and get out there and make some money"

Following this and his recent 'removal' from Sega of America we believe Nakayama will soon be similarly 'removed' from his position in Sega Japan as the company takes stock of the somewhat precarious position they're now in, and it will come as no surprise at all to see him "kicked upstairs" in the near future to an icon position with no authority over the running of the company.

But even with that done, there's no easy way to bring Sega back into profit, the success of Sega's coin-op games and operations over the past two years with games like Daytona, Rally Champ, Virtua Fighter 2 and Virtua Cop 2 have done little other than to stop the losses from being greater, and no matter how well they do in coin-op in the future, whether

it's with hit games or through their Trocadero site in London proving to be the greatest success of all time.....it's the consumer market that will decide their fate.

And having to spend a fortune in the consumer market on promoting an inferior product against a cash rich Nintendo and a little Italian plumber called Mario, is not a way that most people would recommend making money in this world.

Nakayama recently caused a stir in Japan when he stated that Japanese coin-op was at crisis point..... *the way CBI see it, Sega could be in a similar situation and unless they get their act together quickly, that situation could deteriorate even more.*

THE CHARTS

Some of what will be a huge offering of new games have started filtering into the Japanese market and subsequently the game popularity charts, and operators look to face a difficult time in sorting them all out.



Sega's *Gunblade NY* has been knocked off the top by Taito's CG driver *Side By Side* followed by Namco's *Prop Cycle* and *Alpine Surfer*, and then *Gunblade*, *Virtual On* and *Time Crisis*. Konami's *Wave Shark* and *Winding Heat* games, and also Jaleco's *Super GT 24 Hours* have not moved into the market yet in sufficient numbers to rate.

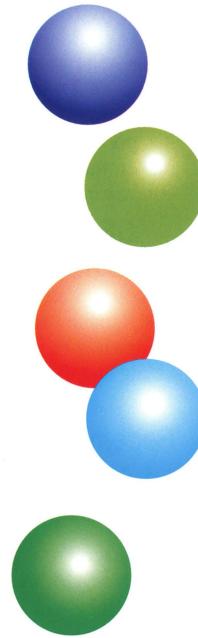
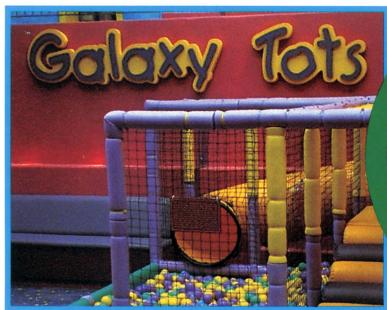
In conversion games, Namco have a quiz game on top, followed by *Die Hard*, *Decathlete*, *Last Bronx* and *Street Fighter Alpha 2*.

Though not yet in the charts, there's excellent reports about Tecmo's *Dead or Alive*, polygon fighting game and a new Raiden game from Seibu, titled *Raiden Fighters*, which has been testing and will be released at the AM Show.

Pinballs are also static with *Congo*, *Jurassic Park*, *Frankenstein*, *Batman Forever* and *Road Show*, splitting the cash boxes.



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Music

CAREY, MORISSETTE, McGRAW, HOOTIE AND COOLIO TOP 1996 JUKEBOX AWARDS

Two females - the popular Mariah Carey and the brash newcomer Alanis Morissette - are the top 1996 Jukebox Awards nominees announced by the Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA). Other multiple nominees were country's Tim McGraw, rapper Coolio and Hootie & the Blowfish.

Winners will be announced at AMOA's 1996 Awards Show & Banquet on September 27th in Dallas during the Association's annual international exhibition.

Carey received four nominations in three categories: both "Fantasy" and "One Sweet Day" (with Boyz II Men) for Pop Single of the Year; and "Daydream" for Pop CD of the year and R&B CD of the year.

Morissette received three nominations: "Ironic" for Pop Single; "Jagged Little Pill" for Pop CD of the Year, as well as a nomination in the Rising Star (Female) category.

The songs and artists are nominated by members of the AMOA who own or service approximately one-half of the nation's estimated 250,000 45rpm and CD jukeboxes. In 10 of the 12 categories, nominations are based on highest jukebox earners between June 1995 and June 1996.

Redemption

ICE TO SWITCH TO VOODOO GRAPHICS WITH HOME RUN DERBY

One of the 'hottest' big games in the market today is ICE Inc's Home Run Derby, the Baseball video, batting cage that is consistently out earning all comers in FEC's across America, but the company believe the introduction of the Voodoo Graphics chipset to the game will make it even more appealing to players.

Pinball

SEGA RELEASE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Sega Pinball of the USA have released their latest creation into the market, a game titled Independence Day that's themed on the current movie of that name which is setting records in US cinemas.

The game probably comes a bit too soon after Twister for the present state of the Pinball market, and for Sega, but we believe the



company's licensing agreements take away their 'independence' and contractually force them to get the games into the market when the film is released, regardless.

The game incidentally is pretty good and probably worthy of a much better response from players than it's likely to get, the way things are with Pinball.



Video

SEIBU LETS LOOSE WITH A POTENTIAL "BIG ONE"

Seibu are about to release a new Raiden game, titled Raiden Fighters which on our reports has all the makings of another hit game.

The game has been well tested and those in Japan who have seen it and played it, say it's got all the good points of previous Raiden games, plus a lot more, and they firmly believe it can emulate the long standing success of those very good games.

Raiden Fighters will get its first showing to operators in general at the AM Show.

SPORTS GAME FOR TECMO?

We hear rumours of Tecmo who have just released their great looking polygon fighting game, Dead or Alive, being in the process of developing a sports game in polygon graphics, also on the Sega Model 2 system, that has everyone extremely excited.

Don't know if they'll show it at the AM Show or not, as the marketing of Dead or Alive will be their prime aim at that show, but it's good to see this good game maker really getting into the polygon caper.

DE ALL SET TO ROLL

Data East are now in a position to concentrate on what they do best, make video games, after completely reorganising their marketing and distribution situation.

Music

ROWE CONCLUDES TESTS ON "UNIVERSITY" JUKES

Rowe/AMi has recently concluded test marketing their University Logo MM-2 Theme Boxes. Joel Friedman, executive vice president said, *"The response from players and operators to the University Theme Boxes was stronger than we imagined it would be. The alumni and students are proud of their schools and loved playing their school's themed box. Local sports bars, restaurants, clubs and campus locations reported enthusiastic interest for University boxes."*

Currently in limited production are theme boxes for: University of Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Washington, Ohio State University and Penn State University. And soon to be released theme boxes are: University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin and Michigan State University.



Above: The 'snazzy' looking University of Michigan themed JB that was shown in Brasil.

We are considering additional universities and colleges if the market so demands. It is a long expensive and tedious process to license each individual university. Included in the price are all royalty payments required by the universities for the use of their logos."

Following the success of the "Insta-Prize" on the video redemption game, Solar Spin, it seems certain that this feature will figure prominently in the new machines they are set to release.

Acclaim meanwhile, Lazer-Tron's parent company, don't look like having any new video product for AMOA, but could have something good coming for IAAPA.

A couple of the University themed jukeboxes were shown at the SALEX Show in Brazil and both Rowe and Cash Box were surprised at how well the international marketplace responded to American university identification.

It seems very likely that some of the new themed jukeboxes will make their way overseas as well.



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World's Apart

THOMSON ENTERTAINMENT AND INTAMIN TO WORK ON JOINT PROJECT IN BRAZIL

Thomson Entertainment of the UK and Intamin AG of Switzerland have announced that they will collaborate on a new motion theatre project in Brazil.

The 36-seat theatre under construction at the GU GU Park entertainment centre in Sao Paulo will feature Intamin motion bases and a selection of ride experiences from Thomson Entertainment's library. The theatre is due to open at the end of 1996.

It is being constructed using a configuration of nine of Intamin's four seat Maxi Motion, six-axis simulator units. Thomson will provide GU GU with access to more than 40 rides it holds under license.



The two companies have traditionally held leading positions in distinct segments of the leisure market. Thomson Entertainment is one of the world's largest simulator manufacturers with sales of around 400 simulators worldwide.

Intamin is known as a major designer and manufacturer of motion-bases amusement rides and transportation systems and was the first to install motion bases in a cinema environment.

Chris Chaddock, sales and marketing director for Thomson Entertainment commented that the project would benefit from the respective strengths of the two companies.

He said, "Intamin has rightly earned a reputation for the quality of its engineering and its reliability and operator friendliness, while we have invested heavily in our ride library in recent years and will continue to do so."

Quem Se Acha Do Negócio E Não Conhece O Sistema Neo Geo, Está Perdendo Tempo



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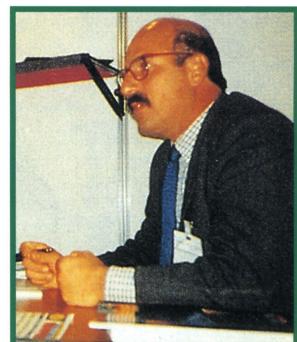
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South America

SALEX SHOWS STRENGTH OF SOUTH AMERICAN MARKET



If they weren't already gone, the days of South America being treated as a second rate coin-op and amusement attraction market, were completely blown away with SALEX '96, held at the end of July in Sao Paulo, Brasil.

SALEX '96 showed the world that South America is now, not only a mature market that's prepared to spend money on good, new product, but that it's also a market where confidence in the industry is much higher than in many other markets which have been in the past, more favourably treated, SALEX showed that South America should be treated as a very valuable market by manufacturers.



OPERATORS DON'T WANT TO USE COPIES

One of the things about South American operators that surprised many visitors who believed Brasil and other South American countries to be a cesspool of counterfeit games, was the attitude of operators towards counterfeit games. They found the simple facts of the matter are that by far the greater majority of operators don't want to use copy games, they will gladly buy originals only, as long as they have a chance of making money out of them, but the problem has been that foreign importers and exporters send and bring games into the different countries in a manner that makes their prices to operators, impossible to operate profitably.

South American operators are not greedy, they like to make money, but they are not greedy, all they ask is to be able to buy games at the best prices that local import Laws will allow, and this can only be achieved if foreign companies seek the services of local companies, on the best way to bring product into the Brasilian or other South American markets.

And though there's no concern about counterfeits in regard to the big dedicated machines that are now coming in, this same path must be followed to ensure operators get the games at a price that will enable them to profit.

SALEX '97 FOR RIO?

How much more attractive to international visitors, would beautiful Rio De Janeiro be as a venue for SALEX '97 against a return to Sao Paulo where the Mart Centre is fast becoming too small to accommodate the event. Sure there are other venues in Sao Paulo, it's a huge city, but if a change of venue has to be made, why not Rio which has first class exhibition and convention facilities, and is a world destination that everyone on this planet wants to visit.

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Japan

CHANGES AT SEGA AMERICA

Sega Enterprises of Japan recently announced that it would send in one of its own executives, Shoichiro Irimajiri, to be Chairman and CEO of Sega America

The current chairman of Sega America, Hayao Nakayama, is resigning and President/CEO Tom Kalinske is also leaving the company to take a position with Education Technology Inc, a Milken venture company dealing with computer education.

The "changing of the guard" which Cash Box sees as the beginning of the end of the Nakayama reign at Sega, comes on the eve of the much anticipated Nintendo 64-bit home game system's arrival in the US market, where Sega are going to need clear heads and big pockets just to survive.

Mr Irimajiri is walking into a situation that's outcome will have a big bearing on Sega's future..



United States

WORLD GAMING CONGRESS EXPECTS 20,000

author of G-Forces: The 35 Global Forces Restructuring Our Future, will profile the consumer of the future, describing expected behaviour and spending patterns. His comments on gambling will address political, legal and cultural issues that he believes will directly affect the industry - as well as society's future.

Show organisers can be contacted on +1 212 687 0607 or Fax: +1 212 370 4991

South Africa

GAUTENG GAMBLING ON NEW LEGISLATION

News from South Africa's Gauteng Province that the Gauteng Gambling and Betting Amendment Act 6 of 1996, was gazetted on 2nd August. The intention was that all the regulations were to be implemented by 6th September, after comments on the draft were accepted.

Some of the main points of the draft regulations were: that a casino license application fee will cost R 200,000, with an annual license fee of R50,000 plus R500 per gaming machine, and R1000 per casino table per year.

Route Operators and additional gaming machine licenses - for from 6-100 machines look like being limited to racetracks and possibly bingo halls.

Applications for route operator licenses which will be issued very selectively, will cost R100 per machine, with a minimum fee of R25,000 and a maximum fee of R100,000.

Gauteng province intends to license amusement machines. The maximum amount to be charged to play shall not exceed R2-00 and the maximum value or prizes shall be subject to a maximum retail value of R25-00.

As all this comes to pass the well known Gauteng casino and adult entertainment venue "The Ranch" closed its casino in August. Similar unlicensed casino operations in the province will follow suit now that the Gauteng Gambling Act is in place.



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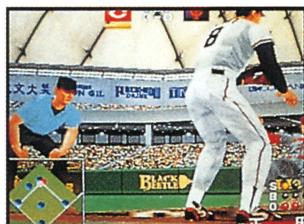
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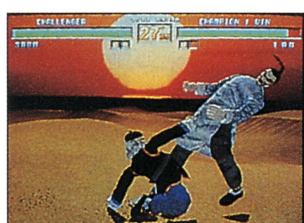
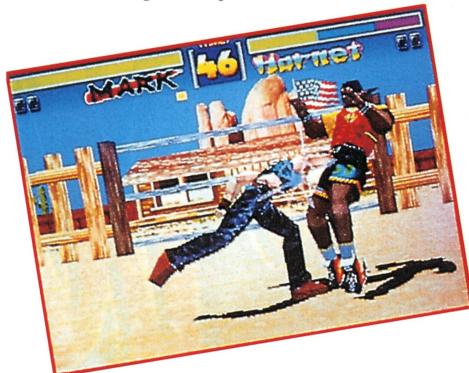
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VIDEO GAMES

Polygons set to Run Riot at Japan's AM Show



Above: Sega's Dynamic Baseball
Below: Taito's Fighters Impact.



Above: Sega's Virtua Fighter 3 and below is their Die Hard on Titan.



just about every manufacturer flex their CG muscles in a way that is going to have many, many operators around the world struggling to decide just which game or games, to buy.

And there'll also be fighting games galore as

Don't be surprised if you walk into Japan's AM Show this month and get accosted by a couple of billion fast moving polygons looking for a place to lie down. The number of polygon games that will be shown at that event suggest that game makers will have an impossible task keeping all the little 'polys' in check, there's sure to be a few billion 'bad guys' among them, and probably another couple of bil that are sick of being tossed around at the speed of light, which will revolt over the three days of the AM Show.

But I guess we'll have to get used to that, just as we've had to get used to the prices that game makers charge for the CG games (do you think they charge by the polygon?) as these games are here to stay, at least until another new technology takes over.

We've lost count as we go to press of just how many new polygon games that we know of will be at AM.....but take our word for it, there'll be a lot.

Driving games will be coming from every direction, they'll all look great, but only the Good Lord knows at this time which ones are going to be the 'big ones', we certainly don't profess to know.

On these pages we'll tell you of just a few of the games that will be popped into the market in the next few months, we wish you well in any early buying sorties.

DRIVERS

Sega will produce their new Touring Car Championship game and just on the law of averages, one would have to give it a good chance of being an earner. Sega have bombed out with their last two drivers in Indy 500 and Manx TT, so they have to be a chance with this one, that's concept is similar to Rally Champ, but the theme is touring cars on street tracks rather than rallying around the countryside.

The game has the usual Sega polish and does look quite good, but how good the players think it is is yet to be decided.

Konami will have Winding Heat at the AM and this one has got some very heavy 'wraps' on it, we've seen some independent takings on the game, and they back up the claim that this one has tested better than Cruis'n USA. Winding heat is covered more fully in the Games Section, so for here, let's just say that it's a serious contender.

Jaleco's Super GT 24 Hours is yet another polygon driver that we've heard excellent reports about and it looks set to make a significant swipe at operators buying dollars. Jaleco has struggled for the past couple of years without the technology, but now that they have it, we get the impression they're going to make every post a winner.

And talking about 'doing it tough', few company's have had as lean a trot as Taito in recent years, but right now, as we write they are sitting up on top of the Japanese dedicated game charts with their CG driving game, Side by Side. We warned readers that this one was good a couple of months ago, but it could be better than that. It's gone into the charts at the same time as Prop Cycle and Alpine Surfer, and not only leads them but has knocked Gunblade NY down a point and a half also.

So there's four that we know of, but there's almost certainly one coming from Namco which we have heard said is a CG Pole Position, but that's unconfirmed, and if Sega are going to release Daytona 2 in the New Year, they must be far enough advanced to show a demo of it.

And Gaelco will also be at the AM with their driver, Speed Up which could be as good as any of them.

Driving games? No shortage, that's for sure.



Above and right: Tecmo's Dead or Alive





Above & below: Konami's Winding Heat



OK, what about fighting games, well Sega will definitely grab the spotlight here with Virtua Fighter 3. The game follows the very successful VF 2 and is their first game on the Model 3 system which throws even more polygons around than the rest of them. But though they will grab the early attention, we'd be a bit wary of this one and check out all the other fighters well and truly before you put your money on the line. For a start, there seems little doubt that this one will be the most expensive by a considerable margin, but what concerns us more is that it's a '3' and that there's very strong rumours that VF3 is virtually going straight into the consumer market to shore up the ailing Saturn system.

How much the new system can improve on VF2 is another question, it will certainly look magnificent, there's no doubt of that, but how much better a game will it be? With the strength of VF2, it's got to be much, much better, to warrant buying it.

Sega will also have Die Hard and this is a good game on the Titan system that's only problem is the way Sega are marketing it at time of writing. We hear that is soon to be rectified and the game will be sold in kit form and if that's the case, we have a sneaking suspicion that this much cheaper game could be a better dollar for dollar proposition than VF3.

So if we put VF3 aside for a while, what else have we got in polygon fighters?

Dead or Alive from Tecmo for a start, this game is already moving into the market and from what we hear it's doing some excellent business, maybe it's the game that will grab the players, or what about Taito's new Fighters Impact. We don't know much about this one, but like several others, it certainly looks the part and similar to Dead or Alive, it's got some good original moves and 'combos' that players should find



Above: Jaleco's Super Gt 24 Hours



Above & top right: Sega's Touring Car



Above: Jaleco's Super Gt 24 Hours

Below: Gaelco's Speed Up



to their liking. Then there's Capcom's Star Gladiator, a game with a bit of a difference, but still basically a fighter, and it appears to be doing well, while there has to be some chance that Capcom will show at least a demo of their upcoming CG3D Street Fighter 3.

Namco will no doubt have their new version of Soul Edge on display, but what odds about another Tekken game or something completely new from this good game maker. Namco missed the boat a bit on fighting games, but now that they're into it, they are making a mark and you'd have to think they'll have something for the AM Show which is their Japanese showcase.

And there will undoubtedly be more.

Sports games, you bet.

You have to put the big jet ski simulators in the sports game category and the big one of these at time of writing is Konami's Wave Shark, which has already put the company in the happy position of having to increase production, as buyers rush to order. Namco have Aqua Jet in this field and Sega have the as yet, unseen Wave Runner, while lurking in the US is ICE's SkiMaxx a good Water skiing game which we have covered recently.

Data East have two sports games, a CG3D Basketball game and a Baseball game for their MLC system, both of these are expected to do well. Sega have a Baseball game that also looks good, and we keep hearing about a new Golf game from them, but that's unconfirmed.

We expect to see at least a couple of good soccer games in CG, Tecmo, Konami and Taito have all had great success with Soccer games and we'd be surprised if they weren't working on a polygon game of this type.

Shooting games? We've heard a few rumbles about CG shooting games, but regardless of them, a game that's going to get a lot of attention at AM is Seibu's Raiden Fighters, which may not be CG, but it's a Hell of a game from what we hear, while in war games, Namco will have the big Tokyo Wars.

So, you'll have to agree that your chances of getting hit by a few billion rampaging, hyped up polygons that have rebelled against being tossed around video game screens at a million miles an hour, is not as far fetched as it may have seemed at the beginning of this round up.

But the main thing is that somewhere here, there's games that are going to make you some money, all you have to do is sort them out.





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VIDEO GAMES

Love 'em or Hate 'em The Big Games Keep Coming



THE GAMES

Get the cheque book ready guys, the big games are rolling out for the new northern summer, and there's going to be stacks of them, all shapes and sizes, all polygon graphics, all sorts of prices and probably all sorts of performances. As we write, a month before Tokyo's AM Show when the big guns, Namco and Sega will let loose with a barrage of big games, there's already three new water skiing simulators, SkiMaxx (ICE Inc), Wave Shark (Konami), Aqua Jet (Namco), four new drivers, Speed Up (Gaelco), Super GT 24 Hours (Jaleco), Winding Heat (Konami), Side by Side (Taito), and a tank game, Tokyo Wars (Namco), in the market.

Notice that there's no Sega games in that early line up, but they are expected to show at least four big new games at AM, a driving game based on European Touring cars, a Jet ski simulator, Virtua Fighter 3 on the Model 3 system, and a polygon sports game. And though Namco figure in the current list twice, you can bet your bottom dollar they have another two or three big games ready for showing at the AM Show.

So the one thing that operators of this type of game won't be able to say in a month or so is, there's no product..... *the way we see it there will probably be too much.*

For several years Sega and Namco have had the polygon graphic simulator market, virtually to themselves, but now as other manufacturers come to grips with the technology, we're starting to see a whole new ball game emerge. Sega and Namco, just by their size and experience will probably continue to hold an edge in the short term, but even they must sense the pack is closing in on them, some of the games from the manufacturers new to CG, are very, very good, and it stands to reason that they can only get better.

Sega of course have their Model 3 system games coming and Namco reportedly also have a bigger more powerful system, but Sega have chosen Virtua Fighter 3 for their first use of the new system and we have to wonder just how much more a new system can give to this game. There's a bit of a 'hoodoo' on third games in a series, they are very rarely as good as the previous game, so we have to ask, can a new system with 'swisher' graphics break that hoodoo?

And Sega are getting themselves into a bit of a knot with this technology caper, in the consumer market, they're saying that their 32 bit system is every bit as good, and can do everything that Nintendo's twice as powerful, 64 bit system can do, while in coin-op they are saying that their twice as powerful Model 3 can do twice as much as the Model 2 and other systems being used by their competitors can do. That doesn't compute in this old head, methinks they've got some problems.

Namco, a genuine innovator however, look to be on solid ground as far as game development goes, they mind their own business and keep turning out quality games. Regular readers will know we at Cash Box are not particularly impressed with the modes they are marketing their games in of late, no linking on Dirt Dash or Alpine Racer, the huge 4 Player Tokyo Wars, for example, but they are good, and they are innovative, and with them actually making money in the consumer market with PlayStation games, they can afford to keep game development well funded.

But what direction are video games heading, all this technology is great, but is it attracting more players?

What's apparently gone unnoticed by the somewhat cloistered video game making community, is that with all this magnificent technology that sees polygons being juggled around at the speed of light, and memory capacity of humungus proportions, is that players, the people that have to ultimately pay for these games, are saying they're bored.....not just the odd one here and there, big numbers of them, all around the world.

Many of those that aren't bored will tell you straight, that they are 'pissed off' at what it costs them to play the big games, but who's listening to any of this?

We believe the first game making company that arsekicks their "high powered" executives and game designers in the direction of an arcade and then locks them in with a bunch of real players for a week or so, will..... providing they're not that full of themselves, that they can't hear what's being said..... start producing games that players will want to play.

It's time the so called 'decision makers' and genius game makers checked out the real world!

THE PLAYERS

Without players we've got nothing, operators know that and what's concerning them these days is not the technology in the games, but the fact that no matter how magnificent the new games may look, players are turning away from them, even the big, high volume locations in some regions are reporting a decrease in takings of 20% and 30% on the big games and operators are quite rightly in our view, starting to be much more selective in their buying than they were when the big games first hit the scene.

Operators are not rushing in to buy any and every big, good looking game that comes into the market now, there's a limit to how many times anyone can be knocked down with an Indy 500 and get back up again, so the selection process of operators in regard to all these big, new games coming into the market is going to be very interesting to say the least.

But no matter what way you look at it, the operators are the meat in the sandwich, they can only work with what they are given as they hang in there, between the manufacturers that receive and the players, who they hope will give.

Players have apparently gone unnoticed by the somewhat cloistered video game making community, that are besotted with all this magnificent technology that sees polygons being juggled around at the speed of light, and memory capacity of humungus proportions..... but players, the people that have to ultimately pay for these games, are saying they're bored..... not just the odd one here and there, big numbers of them, all around the world.

Many of those that aren't bored will tell you straight, that they are 'pissed off' at what it costs them to play the big games, but who's listening to any of this?

We believe the first game making company that arsekicks their "high powered" executives and game designers in the direction of an arcade and then locks them in with a bunch of real players for a week or so, makes them talk and listen to the players and play the games with their own money, will..... providing those executives and game designers are not that full of themselves, that they can't hear what's being said..... start producing games that players will want to play.

It's time the so called 'decision makers' and genius game makers checked out the real world!

How high on players "wish lists" do the 'brains' at Midway think Mortal Kombat 4 is, or those at Sega think Virtua Fighter 3 is..... what about the 'heads' at Namco and Ridge Racer 3?

Hate to be the one to tell them, but they aren't even on most players 'wish lists'. Even Daytona 2, which operators all round the world are hanging out for, isn't on a lot of those lists.

Been there done that, give us something different, give us something new.....is the message we're hearing.

In many cases, in most cases for that matter, players are getting much more of what they see as 'value' out of their home game systems with games like Doom than they can get out of an arcade game, they'll tell you that openly.....and if you think that's a bit ominous, wait till Nintendo's Super Mario 64 gets out there in real numbers.

Players are getting a bit sick of constantly being ignored, look what happened to Pinball, the players were yodelling for ages that they were sick to the teeth of all these shutes and ramps, of having to wait ten minutes while the ball done a few laps around the chrome crap before they could get a whack at it, the distracting Dot Matrix sequences, multi ball, disappearing balls and bodgy themes.

Manufacturers ignored them (and fools like us who dared to bag their games) and kept spitting out the same sort of games like there was no tomorrow..... different artwork with a new licensed title, move things around a bit, add a few more balls to multi ball or a couple of extra yards of chrome, and ship it out..... another great new game. Ha!

And when the players saw this and realised that no one was listening to anything they were saying, they simply walked away..... and even then the manufacturers didn't get it, they started talking about 'periodical cycles'.

"Periodic cycle" my butt! That's a cop out, it took us a while to wake up to that one, we were brainwashed into preaching the 'cyclical' line ourselves for a while, sure history has been known to repeat itself, but there's always a reason, it doesn't just happen.

And if video game manufacturers don't start talking and listening to video game players..... real ones.....the guys that have to pay..... they could easily find themselves in the same boat as Pinball manufacturers.

It's very easy to get wrapped up in ones own little world, but it still should be impossible to forget, that without players, we've got absolutely zilch.



VIDEO GAMES

Home Game Systems



Sony's PlayStation must give Sega nightmares as it continues to gain support over their Saturn system. The PlayStation game *Wipeout*, from Psygnosis was (and still is) a huge success and now they are releasing *Wipeout XL*, (above) a great sequel.

Despite trotting out all their big arcade hits on the Saturn system, Sega have not succeeded in shaking off the "newcomer", Sony



ONLY ON SEGA SATURN



While increasingly huge and technologically advanced amusement centres are springing up all over the place, offering players interactive and intense entertainment on a scale never before seen (and luring every cent out of our unsuspecting pockets), no-one can deny the effect that the many just-as-intense, just-as-involved home video game systems are having on the coin-op market.

Mega-popular game systems such as those of Sega and Nintendo have created a burgeoning home video game culture that shows no sign of slowing. A world of former "coin-op kids" have turned into a world of "couch operators". Of course, to game makers this is not necessarily a bad thing - despite fierce competition between the industry heavyweights (Sega, Nintendo, Sony, et al.) these companies are scoring megabucks from the huge cashpool that parents spend on kids, and older players spend on entertainment.

Consumers have also benefited from this invasion - with the vast array of diverse and brilliant games now available, home entertainment will never be the same again. The very best home video games sport graphics that rip your eyes out of your sockets, player involvement that

wears a bum-shaped dent in your couch upholstery, and a challenge to your skill that will make you feel 12 years old again (if you're not already this age, that is.)

But that's just my opinion - are home systems really any match for the tried-and-true, noble arcade video game? To find out what actual consumers think about these games I went "undercover" to find the facts of the matter, and what better place to see what's selling than the breeding grounds of gameheads - the sacred game shops!

I visited various shops that sell home entertainment systems and computer games - some specialty shops, some department stores and, to avoid bias, I also visited the "other side" - arcades and amusement centres. I then accosted a range of hapless customers and demanded to know

Many people in this industry don't want to talk about home game systems, or just shrug them off as an annoyance, but we've gone a bit further in this article by Skye Lansen which she titled,

"The Couch vs Coin-op - The Battlelines are Drawn"

We took our own advice and talked to the players

why, goddammit, are they splashing out such vast amounts of cash for games I thought are, essentially, inferior to arcade games?

In between getting lost testing out the latest games (purely research, I swear) I managed to get a few interesting facts and figures, and was convinced of the simple beauty of a home system, but still unsure as to who wins the "war" of arcades vs. home systems.

It seems though, that the reign of Sonic the Hedgehog and Mario Bros is over - most of the people I approached were looking to buy CD-ROM games for their personal computers, while others were looking for games for their Sony Playstations and Sega Satellites. About 70% of consumers said they owned "a lot of games" and 50% said they play them "nearly every day", which means that these "Gameheads" are sure as hell serious about their leisure. The number one favourite game was undeniably Sim City 2000, followed hotly by Doom, Warcraft 2 & Wipeout. (Note that none of these are games that have been in the arcades)

While these people are dedicated to their home systems, 40% said they still frequented amusement centres, and the rest said they never or only rarely go. I asked the arcade patrons why they bother if they have a home system and the general consensus seemed to be because the games are definitely bigger and better, with superior graphics, sound and speed.

When asking which they preferred - arcade games or home system games I was surprised to find 50% swear allegiance to their home systems and 50% stay loyal to arcades, despite owning home systems and having a grumble about the price of playing games in arcades.

It seems that home entertainment systems have a few distinct advantages over arcades in some areas, while coin-op machines still reign supreme in others. One obvious advantage of home systems is exactly that - you can stay at home. Worlds of fun can be explored without leaving that comfy couch, you can press pause while you grab a snack or relieve yourself, and if you're not quite as adept as your friends on the games, you can spend hours practicing in private so you can blitz them with your dazzling speed and skill next time.

Above all, the main attraction seems to be that you don't have to feed in a constant stream of hard-earned coins to get to the next level.

One interviewee - Janet, 23 agreed: "Both arcade and home games have a place, but it's good to just be able to sit at home, enjoy a game and not blow your weeks spending money in a couple of hours"

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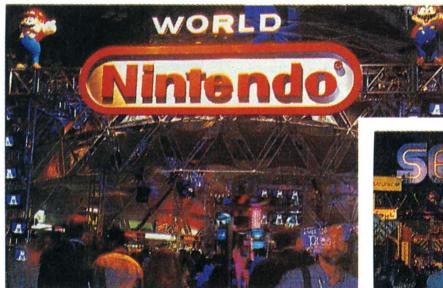
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Home Game Systems



Big business..... over 60,000 delegates attended the Electronic Entertainment Expo where Nintendo unveiled their new System 64 and Sega showed Virtua Fighter 3

Computer games have even more advantages to lure punters home and away from the arcades. The ever-growing technology of CD-ROM has meant that on the right equipment the spectacular graphics and great sound and intensity that were the sole domain of arcade games are available on a little shiny disc for anyone's pleasure. Despite the high initial cost of CD-ROM games, not to mention the computer itself, people are attracted to the sophistication of the games - the high player involvement, the simplicity and the fact that longer adventures can be run - games can be played that never end but continually build as the players skills increase. Generally I found that the



certainly not "couch potatoes".

Not completely trusting the fickle whims of the consumers though, I decided to consult the experts on why, despite the highly addictive nature of arcade games, people are increasingly turning to entertaining themselves at home.

I questioned a variety of shop owners and managers, nearly all of whom have seen a great increase in home systems popularity. One guy suggested that greater freedom of choice in games was a contributing factor, and most agreed that the amazing technology of the systems was the most attractive aspect. Rod, manager of a bookstore that sells a large range of games said that *"There is increasingly less difference between arcade and home systems for graphics, speed etc, however the joysticks make the greatest difference."* A couple of others said that the calibre of machine available in systems

like the Sony Playstation and Sega's Saturn is fantastic value for the price. Other comments were that *"Home system games are more playable"* and that *"Home versions end up cheaper in the end."*

Interestingly enough, these purveyors of "in-home" entertainment were mostly confident that the arcade game would continue to live and thrive off a market continually hungry for more products, new games with bigger and better graphics: *"They will both always be around because with technology, machines and games will always change and never stay the same."*

Most of my "experts" though, prophesised that the market would come to favour home systems above arcades: *"As people spend more money on home entertainment they will invest less in arcades, and the requirement to go outside the home to play games will be gone"*, and *"Home video games will probably dominate due to a tendency of people in general spending more time at home".*

Personally, I think that no matter how amazing home system technology becomes, or how affordable it is, or how great a range of games they have, the noisy thrill of arcades will prevail in seducing players to depart with their cash for a while to come yet. Who really knows though - in a couple of years everyone may own their own virtual reality headset, robots will be doing our work, and we will never have to leave the house. In such an event, we can only hope that we get to drive our virtual cars to our virtual offices on a Daytona-styled racetrack.

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Home Game Systems

Obviously, the fact that these systems are "going off" so much, as the kids would say, has heavy implications for the coin-op industry - are these home systems attracting money away from amusement centres? Of course they are.

I had become accustomed to thinking of home video games as secondary to the real thing of playing games at an arcade - I mean, why have cheap take-away when you can eat out? But just as you can now buy gourmet take-away in a mind-numbing variety of styles, so too can you get gourmet games in a home system.

**I THOUGHT THAT WAS THAT,
AND THEN JACK POINTED
ME IN THE DIRECTION OF A
NINTENDO 64 MACHINE AND
SUPER MARIO 64.**

Lordy Lord, please Jack, can I take some of my previous words back? Did I really say the reign of Mario was over?



Oh oh...

And that arcade games would always have a place because of the high technology in them?

Oh boy, coin-op has got a problem, Nintendo's new 64 bit system and the absolutely incredible Nintendo game, Super Mario 64, have completely blown me away, it has to be seen to be believed, to play it is enjoyment of the very highest calibre..... bliss..... *I've got to have one, to hell with the cost, I won't buy that new dress.*

This system and Mario takes gameplayers to paradise, and along with blowing the minds of all who see it, there's no doubt in my mind that it's going to blow the Sony and Sega systems right out of the water and take more players away from coin-op. This is indeed, heavy stuff.

Nintendo, the long time masters of home video games, have blitzed the market with their latest offering, the 64 bit system gives magnificent graphics, and full 3D motion in any direction, from any angle.

You can even change the perspective of how you approach the game. The normal perspective is taken from a camera behind your shoulder, (if you turn Mario to a mirror you can even see the little cameraman on a cloud behind you) but if you want to see the game from the side, the front, from overhead or anywhere else, no problems, the system can do it.

Hey, Sonic!



People are going to be raving about this game and system for years to come, I've been playing games of all types since I was a real 'littly', but I've never seen anything like it, and its impact simply has to be felt in cash boxes everywhere Come on Jack, don't we need a new Nintendo in the office for research?

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Home Game Sales War

We don't like to say "we told you so", but more than 12 months ago we predicted the sales war in home games that is now about to erupt.

Nintendo, flush with funds (they've been making genuine profits on their 3 & 4 \$billion profits for years and have over a \$billion in cash reserves) and riding high with a product that every game player on the planet will want, once they see it, are about to launch their new 64 bit system into the US market....a market where all the pundits agree, there has to be a major casualty.

We think that casualty could be Sega, who took the #1 spot in the USA off Nintendo a couple of years ago with their superior 16 bit system and the spending of many, many millions of dollars on advertising. Sega now have there back right up to the wall, there's no way known to mankind they can outspend

Nintendo on advertising or combat the incredible editorial (free advertising) that the new system and Super Mario 64 is getting in every sector of the media, and even with the imminent release of Virtua Fighter 3 and what looks like Daytona 2 into the home market this year, they still have an inferior product, the Saturn has battled to match the newcomer to the scene,

the Sony Play Station system, and like Nintendo, Sony also have a lot more available cash than Sega to fight a sales war. How the arrogant Sega cop it, when Nintendo apply the blow-torch to their rather soft underbelly in the consumer market, could have far reaching implications for the coin-op industry.



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VIDEO GAMES



Karl, 29

Down on the street in the arcades is where video game legends are made, and once you get down amongst it and ask a few questions it pretty quickly becomes apparent what's hot, what's cool and what's something else altogether.

I spent a couple of days in arcades and talked to as big a cross section of players as I could about their current like and dislikes, their all time favourite games, what they've played lately that they wished they hadn't, which company they thought made the best games and what they would like to see in video games.

So this is an article giving a glimpse of what some real people in arcades had to say about video games over a couple of winter days in Sydney, a city which we've found has a type of game player that's pretty representative of most players in the world.



Michael, 13

It shouldn't come as

a great surprise to anyone that I found Daytona to still be the most universally popular game even after being in the arcades for close on two years.

Nearly all that I talked to, spoke of the realism of the game and graphics as being the deciding factors:

"I can't drive on the street so I do it on this machine." Karl, 29, a "motor-head" who's lost his license.

Those who put forward Daytona as their Number One preferred game ranged in age from 13 to 51. Operators that were spoken to, also referred to Daytona with a reverent tone.

"Daytona's continuing popularity is unprecedented." Operator.

I found that there was only one other game that got anywhere near Daytona in the current favourite stakes and that game was Street Fighter Alpha 2.

The obvious difference here was that this game was attracting a far more "hardcore" crowd, and players were generally younger. In one of the big arcades I was in, SF Alpha 2 was located against the far back wall and numerous small groups of teenage boys entered in a very businesslike manner and made a hasty beeline straight to this game, dropped the coins and assumed the position.

"It's got lots of new moves, fast combos and smooth play." Richard, 17.

I found these two games were far and away the most popular, after this was daylight and then the next group, which included Virtua Fighter 2 and Alpine Racer. Virtua Fighter 2 got some very big raps, including:

"It's such an in depth game, there's so much detail, I'm still learning after a year at it." Chayya, 20.

Alpine Racer's popularity was tempered by a number of people keen to give it a goodly bagging. Generally however it was appreciated for its realism and for the fact that it was seen as "different".

"I ski and this game tides me over until I get down to the snow." Cathy, 16.

Players

Players Talk, but does Anyone Listen?

by Matt Walker

The all time favourite game question had people rolling their eyes in an attempt to remember that game which at some stage in their arcading career provided more golden moments than any other. I'm sorry to report that there was no amazing discovery here, because a certain game called Daytona was once again called upon the most times to fit the bill.

"It's the best game ever."

Charles, 51.

Equal to Daytona, however, was Street Fighter II Champion Edition.

"For fighting games they got it very right when they made that one," Bourke, 18.

Other games that did well in the all time stakes were the original Virtua Cop, the original Street Fighter, Virtua Fighter II and, lo and behold, Galaga was right up there.

*"Galaga is a *?# legend."* Tony, 25.

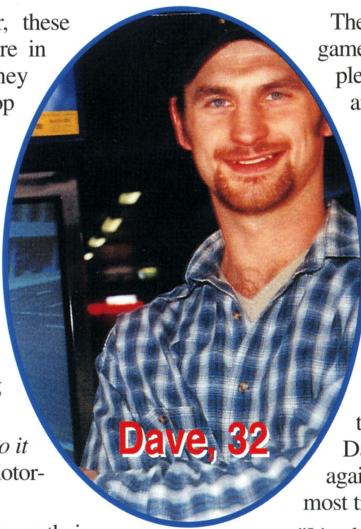
When given the opportunity to bag a game a lot were surprisingly reluctant to do so, many claimed all games were good. However the game which came out on top, and thus making a clean sweep of the categories - and at the same time making my research results very confusing - was Daytona. Possibly this is the beginning of the backlash which inevitably comes when something or someone has more than its fair share of success. Or more likely is, that it just points to Daytona's huge profile in the industry at the moment.

"I know what I like and I don't like Daytona," Dave, 32.

The other games people were most commonly wanting to get angry about were Puzzle Bobble 2, Alpine Racer and Mortal Kombat 3. On the latter, Chad, aged 20 said:

"The gameplay is crappy, it's boring, there's no repeat value." and from Dale who said he was 18, but looked 30:

"The MK games have run their race, they were good in their day, but a few new characters and moves don't mak a new game"



Dave, 32

When asked about which company makes the best games, a good number of the people I talked to didn't have an opinion. Most said they didn't take much notice, but of the punters who did, answers went Sega's way, with just a handful of Capcoms thrown in. One chap put forward this theory;

"Sega seems to put its name in the title of all its games nowadays, so its become a name which is instantly recognisable to a lot of players," Scott, 18.

Upon being asked for what they would like to see more of in video games, by far the most common answer was to make them cheaper.

"I prefer the original Virtua Cop to the sequel because it's half the price to play, the new games are far too dear" Dan, 30.

The other idea which was common was for more linked games in areas other than racing.

"Interactive shooting games where you are shooting and searching for your opponent in different places." Dave, 32.

And another common response was a call for more original ideas from companies and more risk taking.

"More variety, less cloning, more originality, there are too many Street Fighter rip offs," Ben, 22.

Generally the call was for more realistic games, real VR maybe, a few pushed for better graphics while many others wanted games to stop focussing on either fighting, shooting or driving at the exclusion of each other. A few people put forward the idea of games which combined these elements.

An arcade operator went a different way and made the suggestion that games should continue to move towards comfort.

"More comfortable sitting down games, more relaxed, customers stay for much longer." Operator.

An interesting suggestion, which perhaps took its cue from PC games, was a bigger emphasis on games with more strategy.

"I would like to see more games that test your mind, the mind/reflex combo." Greg, 32.

"Every game should let you come into the game at any stage you want, so that players can basically take up where they left off last time they played. To have to go through the whole game to get to the part you want to get to, is boring, and turns players away" Chayya, 20.

"Games we can afford to play" Michael, 13

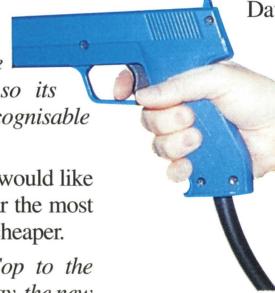
"Completely new titles, sequel games are generally a rip off" Steve, 15

"What about an arcade game like Doom, that you can get right into" Bourke, 18.

One of the most common complaints about games these days was the speed at which they

are over and that many of them don't award an accomplished player with enough extra time and higher levels of play.

"That "Game Over" comes up far too quick for the money they charge"
Dave, 32



Brian, mid 30's

"The thing which lets games down these days in comparison to home games, is that so many don't offer that next level when you're good." Geoff, 24.

"Most games now are too savage, you hardly have time to get the feel of a game and your money's gone" Scott, 18

The big social issue around video games at the moment is the amount of violence in them and whether it has reached the point where it is a mental health risk for players. I found the same as what the video game manufacturers must also be finding, that graphic violence is something a lot of players appreciate, particularly the younger ones.

"I would like to see more blood," James, 12.

Many of the older players were more aware of the violence issue and had noted the trend towards more graphic violence and were not impressed.

"They should tone down on the blood, it just isn't necessary," Bourke, 18.

"Video games aren't necessarily getting better and better but they are definitely getting more and more violent. That's what they think people want and that's the definite trend that's happening," Russ, 34.



So there it is, just a bunch of randomly plucked opinions, a small indication of the issues and the games that are being talked about in the arcades.

Nothing brain shattering and nothing really new, but it is coming from the mouths of the people that are paying for the games, and with some of the answers like those relating to sequels and cost for example, we had to wonder if game makers ever take time to listen to them, or treat them with the respect they deserve.

We called a former interviewee, Mick, 21 (Cash Box July) to round out this article and the first thing he said was; *"Have you guys seen that new Mario game on the Nintendo?"*

CBI: *"Didn't think you were into home games Mick"*

Mick: *"I wasn't, but you've got to see this, I ordered one straight away, system and all."*

CBI: *"What about the arcade games Mick, seen anything new you like?"*

Mick: *"There's a few new ones that look OK, but except for that Virtua On thing they're much the same old sort of shit.....they don't come close to Mario mate, it's incredible"*

CBI: *"We've seen it Mick, it is good, but we're more interested in the arcade games right now, last time we spoke, you reckoned everything was boring, has anything popped up to change that?"*

Mick: *"Not really, with possibly Virtua On the exception, it's OK, good fun if you can play it with a mate, but most of the others don't grab me. That motorbike game (Manx TT) looked good, so I got into it, but it sucks after you have a couple of games.....boring"*

"I watched some kids on one of those bike things (Prop Cycle) and you certainly can't say it's not different, but I haven't had a go yet, I don't think it's my sort of game. A few of my mates are keen on Time Crisis, but apart from that there's not a lot if you're not into fighting games or bloody Daytona, and I've had a gutful of them"

Arcade Operators

Counting on Technology

by Matt Walker

The video game industry is more and more under the control of skyrocketing game prices and prone to the trends of home games whose technology is increasing at an incredible rate. The release of Nintendo's 64 bit system and recent PC events, such as Quake, are continuing to

who are realising a vision of the arcade which does justice to the sleek, sit down, simulated world of the 1990's, what the hell is going on.

The people we spoke to were: Michael Solomon (Playtime Centres), Bill Beckham (The Red Baron), Fred Milner (Flashback Centres) and Peter Psaltis (Galaxy World Arcades). I started by asking how business was.

It would seem things are fairly undramatic out there at the moment, with some commenting on a recent stabilisation after a period of slump.

"Reasonably buoyant," "on a plateau," "can't complain," "much of muchness" and "stable," is a reasonable summary of the sentiments expressed. The term "cycles" also kept cropping up. You ask an average person on the street how they're doing and they will invariably say "good", "not bad" or "very well thank you." You ask an operator how they're doing and they will usually mention at what point they are at within a "cycle."

Michael Solomon states a universal when he says; *"The market is cyclic, doom and gloom is always followed by elation. You have to stick out your chin and reign in the costs."*

Peter Psaltis

offers this;

"We're always waiting for the next Daytona game. Every couple of years a big game comes along and it goes along until the kids' thirst is quenched. Then you have to ride it out until the next time one comes along."

The question *"What are the biggest challenges you are currently facing as an operator?"* didn't prove to be a very challenging question. The answer came with great similarity from each, more than one of the operators making reference to the old days when things were different.

Peter Psaltis:

"The increase of technology and the resulting increase in price. Long gone are the days when you pay for a machine and make it back in a couple of weeks."

Bill Beckham:

"Because of the reduced revenue in today's market, I think the biggest challenge is to keep an extremely tight control of all variable costs."

Michael Solomon:

"Moving games around is very important. It's got to the point where the supervisors wonder if they are employed more as furniture removalists."

"For example, our shopping centre locations - you have to realise that people at shopping centres have routines. They park close to the same place every week, they go to the same shops to do their shopping, and they go into the arcade to play their favourite game. If it's not where it should be and another is in its place, they may well say 'what the hell' and give the other game a go and then go and look for the old game afterwards..."

"Also, Playtime are one of the few chains providing training for supervisors. We are adding a training room to the arcades. We have breakfast staff meetings at 5:30 am to discuss problems etcetera..."

"When it comes to the actual games, operators have limited alternatives - there's no saving a dud game - but how often do these operators lift the bonnet, get their hands dirty and tamper with the optional settings? What does it take for an operator to tell the world that this game is now only worth half of what it formerly was for a game, and what are the repercussions of such an act. How far does an operator have to be pushed before he will start messing with a game's credentials in the difficulty settings?"

Peter Psaltis:

"Games have a life span, you can only have a slight effect by changing optional settings. I would rather sell the machine than reduce the price. Dropping the price shouldn't be a prerequisite of how you run a business. Price of play is indicative of how good a game is...The companies that have tried to increase income by means other than lowering price of play are the ones that stay in the industry."

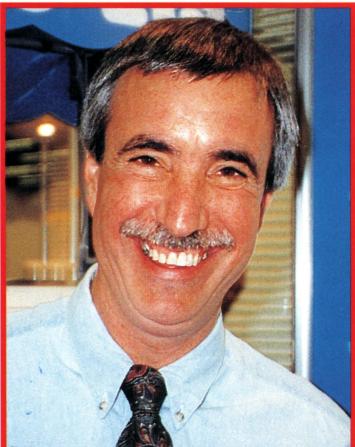
"Selling the game, changing the location, running competitions, changing difficulty levels are all ways of increasing revenue. Or there can be subtle reasons why people aren't playing games like maybe the gears aren't shifting from third to fourth properly, or maybe the steering isn't responding properly." Michael Solomon; *"We monitor difficulty settings all the time and keep in close correspondence with some of the companies about this issue..."*

"...When we halved the price of a game on



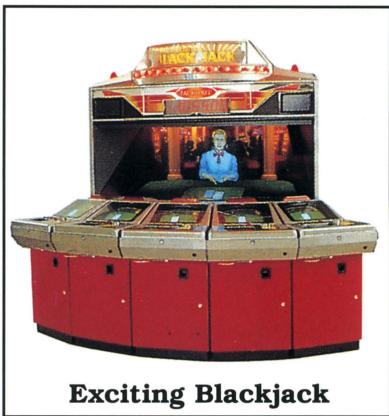
Above: Playtime's Michael Solomon

Right: Bill Beckham, the "Red Baron" from Ohio.



steal more ground from the once untouchable maxim that "arcade games are, and always will be, superior". If you've got the latest home system, and a big TV screen hooked up to a kickarse stereo, how far are you off the real thing? And how much longer until that gap is no longer appreciable?

More and more, the big operators are concerned with the look of their arcade, the staffing of it, and the atmosphere in it. Those among us who yearn for the dinghy pinnie parlour with cigarette smoke hanging in the air and the local hoods hanging outside, had better just forget about it. I don't think we are going back to those golden - well, off yellow - days. We are now all swept along by the pioneering spirit of the big time operators who cling to the mane of the wild beast that is technology, forking out the bucks in ways never before thought imaginable, and knowing that the only way forward is to embrace change, be the entrepreneur, and make every thing look as shiny as possible. So I asked some of the operators,



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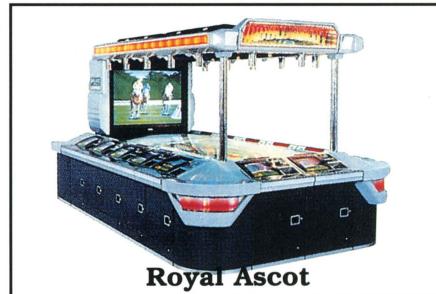


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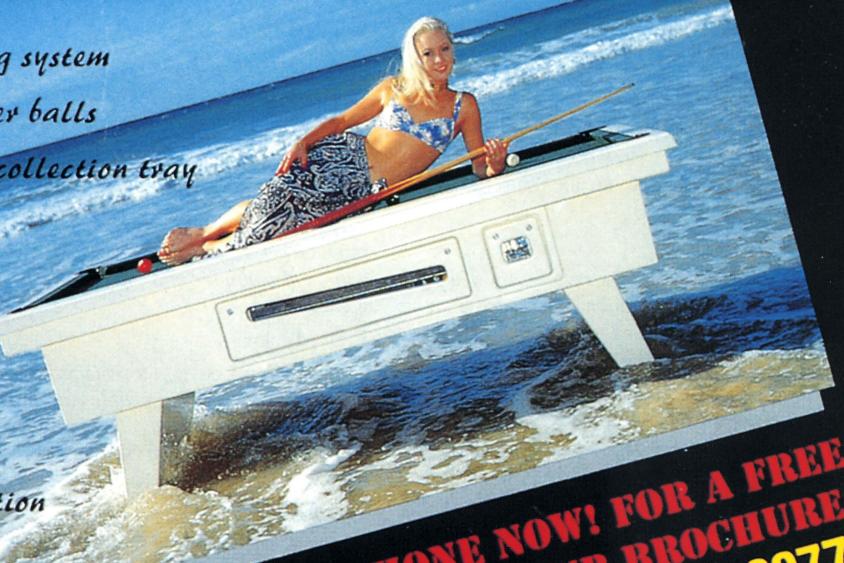


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Arcade Operators

Daytona we managed to maintain earnings. The idea is to halt a downward trend."

"I guess a good indication of what we will get in the future gameswise will depend on what the people want.

That comment led to the obvious question of what, apart from a lower price of play, they thought the players were looking for in games these days.

Bill Beckham;

"As everyone, I believe a challenge other than driving, fighting and shooting would be well accepted but, as everyone, I don't know what it would be."

Michael Solomon;

"Players want more variation, bigger screens and better graphics."

Peter Psaltis;

"Players want more sophistication. Their reflexes tested further. They want it more realistic. They are waiting to get their teeth into VR, the concept of VR is good but the software's poor. They want to have perspired. They want to play it because it they want to beat it. They want no two games to be the same."

Fred Milner;

"Everyone is looking for new games and new ideas, not rehashes of same old games."

"One answer to the question of what players want is very obvious, has been for some time and is growing moreso. They want to play these games at home."

Home games were originally a spin off, and like Melrose Place was to Beverly Hills 90210, the spin off is now a revolution. As the home game movement grows out of control, ignoring the issue has long ceased being an option for the big operators. So do operators look at it like Frankenstein looked at his monster - the "oh my God, what have I created" scenario - or is the attitude different? How do you view the relationship between the arcade and the home games?

Peter Psaltis;

"Games at home are helping us. They are creating a new generation of players. Parents are playing these games as well as kids. People are no longer intimidated by the industry like they used to be..."

"It's like videos. When they started everyone thought that they would ruin the film industry, everyone thought the public would just wait a few months until it came out on video. But there's nothing like enjoying yourself in the atmosphere of the theatre. Or being the first one of your friends to see or play it first..."

"Arcade games are more interactive. Home games will never be as good because of the sheer costs of it. I see the home games as a bonus. The advantages outweigh the disadvantages..."

...Our game gets rejuvenated when the home

games come out. People practice at home then come back to the arcade to play to show how good they've become."

Michael Solomon;

"What arcades have over home games is the social outing aspect. I believe that arcades are no longer an impulse thing as much, the important thing is to make them into a "destination point" like bowling alleys and the cinema etc. Games arcades have to be purposeful."

Bill Beckham;

"The socialising is what differentiates us from the home market and if the manufacturers of video can conceptualise and develop games

with that market difference in mind - not only in mind but as a definite specific end result - I think it will help. Sure the new technologically advanced games are different and ahead of home, but because of the cost factors I don't think that is the answer."

The video game industry has certainly had its share of boom and bust in its short lifespan. With the operators belief that "cycles" dominate, and the fact that technology seems to be deciding its own fate now, trying to predict the future of the video game industry is perhaps not everyone's idea of a good time.

Or as **Bill Beckham** put it, "Hell, I don't know - I'm just an operator."

But I asked them anyway to use the coin-op crystal ball and answer the question, "What are your predictions for the future in video games?"

Bill Beckham;

"I think we will see the downgrading of the basic video games into video terminal cabinets located in commercial markets. Perhaps it will be where the manufacturer gets a specific amount for every game played. (I also believe in our near future we will continue to see the hi tech video simulators such as Namco and Sega are producing.) This will allow us to offer almost unlimited multiples of a particular hot game or games."

Fred Milner;

"In South East Asia it remains a cheap form of entertainment where people can mix socially. A simple nice way to pass the time. The short to mid term prospects seem OK but in the long term who knows? Your living room may end up as one big VR."

As a final question things were taken right back to basics, I asked; "What games are doing well for you at the moment?"

Peter Psaltis;

"You can't go past Daytona, Sega Rally's been good. Virtua Cop, Virtua Cop 2, Time Crisis, Gunblade and Ace Driver."



Above: Fred Milner of Hong Kong's Flashback arcades



Left: Galaxy World's Peter Psaltis

Michael Solomon;

"Gunblade is doing well at the moment."

The feeling that this is an industry that is turning a corner with many not quite sure what to expect, is probably not an unusual one for most operators to be experiencing. This industry has felt like it was turning a corner ever since Space Invaders hit the milk bars.

Some may even say this industry has been on the turn since it started. But just as the top games are becoming more and more intense, realistic and all consuming, so too would it seem that the arcades are moving towards being a world unto themselves. A world that offers escape in increasingly higher doses, and price, every year.

There seems to be a lot of hesitation out there about the cost of staying with technology and whether the industry can sustain the current costs for much longer.

The argument by many of the operators, which came through loud and clear, was that the arcades' role has been changed by the combination of home games and high prices, and that the emphasis now has to be changed to heighten the strengths which remain. Arcades have to rely more on the fact that they are a social experience. There has to be more and more competition between players and it has to be on a continually grander scale.

Hopefully, the manufacturers will come to the party with increasingly creative game ideas, instead of just increasingly expensive ones. Games that will make the future seem wide open rather than trying to prove there is a limitless number of ways to copy something. For the prices both operators and players are paying now, they should be expecting A LOT.

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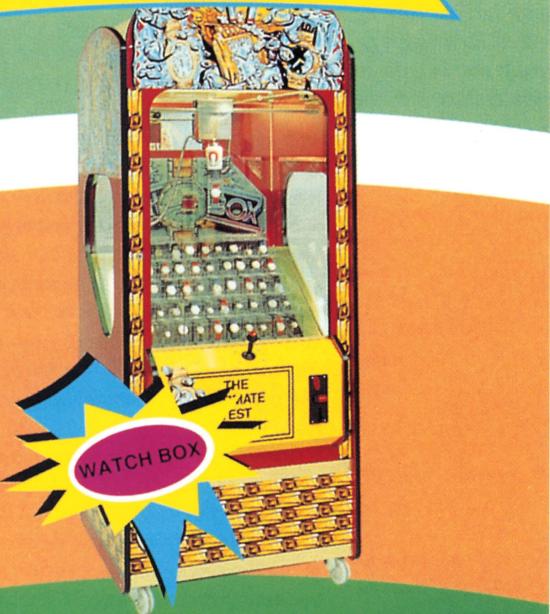


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The future... as they see it...

In this "Video Games" feature of Cash Box International we have spoken to the players (both coin-op and consumer) and we have spoken to the operators. As a result, we thought it only fair that we also speak to a few manufacturers to get their views.

Manufacturers can end up having a huge effect on the direction in which the industry develops, simply by producing certain types of games, or by not producing others.

The leading companies over the past couple of years have been Sega, Namco and Midway so we asked the sales and marketing gurus from these three organisations to answer a couple of simple questions.

Namco failed to respond in time, but Ken Anderson, VP of sales and marketing at Sega GameWorks; Joe Dillon, VP of sales at Williams/Bally-Midway; gave us their thoughts on the state of the video game market and how they see its future.

It seems that both companies are confident in video's future, although they stressed that the future was very much in hi-tech. While this means games will only get more expensive, the manufacturers believe that

smart, creative operators will gain longer term earnings from their machines and still be very successful.

Whether or not you agree with their views, you can't deny that these companies make the machines that most players want to play. Following is what they had to say....

CBI: How would you describe the current state of the video game market in general?

Ken Anderson (Sega): The video game market is alive and well. As I observe it, when a manufacturer creates a game that produces good income and is priced accurately, it sells as well, if not better than it always has. We work in a product-driven industry and good product always creates interest.

Also, video game distributors are evaluating the market constantly. They are requesting new creative long-term programs to absorb the increased cost incurred by the current advanced technology existing in video games. The problem distributors have is that their increased financial commitment does not produce enough profit to stimulate them while considering their element of risk. Another problem that distributors have is that the street operator is disappearing faster than new replacement locations are being created. This will begin to change in the future, and an upswing will be noticed.

Finally, the good operator is doing reasonably well and getting better continuously. The marginal operator is disappearing as he cannot compete with the more creative visionary operator. New family entertainment centres, or FECs, and unique designed critical mass entertainment centres are being developed all over the world. These centres are extremely profitable and starving for good product.

An ongoing problem that the video game industry creates is short-term income earning games utilising older, low-tech hardware systems. We need to face the reality that in order to compete for the entertainment dollars, only the long-term simulators with continuing residual values will exist in the future.

Joe Dillon (Midway): From our perspective, the video game market is strong. For example, *Cruisin' USA* has been a hit game for over two years. *NBA Hangtime* is also a hit game. The market is at a point, however, where only strong games will survive. Operators have too many good games to choose from to risk on an average or below average game.

CBI: What predictions do you have for the future of video?

Ken: The future of coin-operated video is both exciting and encouraging. I believe that the future creation of new, unique creative FECs will generate a boom in the video game industry witnessed in the late 80's and early 90's. The video game future is going to demand visionary programs coupled with exciting products. Presently, there are existing companies that



Ken Anderson



Joe Dillon

have the hi-tech board systems necessary to take video games to the next level.

However, as bright as the future is for advanced manufacturing companies creating new generation games, it will be very dim to the manufacturing companies attempting to hold onto the past. Video games are alive and well. We simply need to give them new stimulation.

Along with this re-adjustment of product presentation, we need to include the reality that new investment money is required and therefore unique financial plans are needed. Video games are very capable of luring new investors and capital. We do, however, need to be cognisant of the potential opportunities and seize them.

Joe: New technology opens the doors to new avenues of success. This is demonstrated in the success of our current games. *NBA Hangtime*, for example, has implemented advanced graphics and sound technology to bring the player a realistic NBA experience. The one thing that technology will never replace is creative game design. Games have to be fun to play, regardless of the technology involved. We have the leading game designers in the world. I expect great games in the future as our designers implement advanced technology.

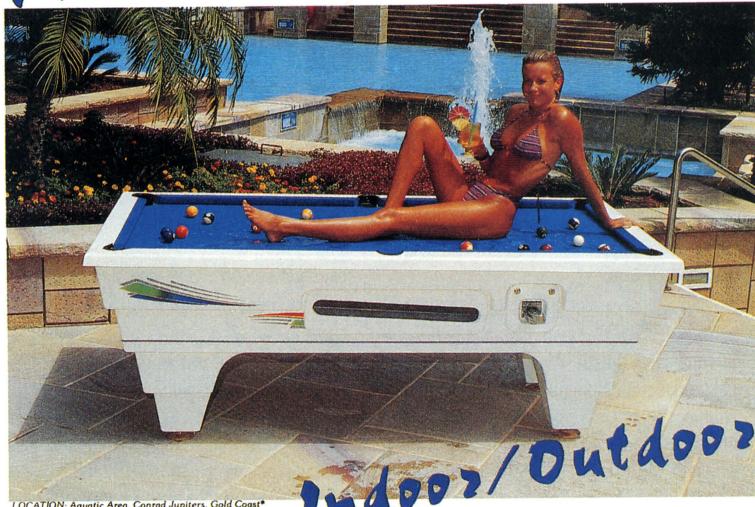
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SALEX '96

The Show

Big show, big attendance, abundant enthusiasm, and a great operator attitude, make SALEX one of the bright spots in an industry that is licking some wounds

SALEX '96 opened in late July to a record attendance, record number of exhibitors and a very heartening enthusiasm for the business of coin operated amusements and all types of associated entertainment.

You can't go to South America without wishing you could bottle the attitude of South American operators and export it all around the world, as no matter how despondent you may be about the state of the industry, a couple of days talking to Brasilian and other South American operators, and you can't help feeling good. No wonder it's one of the most buoyant markets in the world today.

SALEX '96 can only be spoken of as a great success and this event which services the whole South American continent with a population of over 340 million people, is fast developing into

one of the world's major shows after only three years operation. It's a credit to the organisers, Roberto Selles and Steve Whatmore of Worlds Fair Exhibitions as Brasil, much as we who visit there, love it, is not the easiest place in the world to organise an event of this magnitude.

The show filled the two big halls of Sao Paulo's Mart Center, plus a large area of the external space and most of todays current products were on display. The emphasis this year was undoubtedly on big dedicated video games, though Cranes, Jukeboxes, Table and Redemption games were plentiful, the push was on the big videos with mixed displays of all the big games all around the two halls.

Though the manufacturers, Capcom, SNK and Rowe had large displays under their own banner, and companies like NSM, Rock-Ola, Falgas and Recreativos Presas took their own space, SALEX is basically a distributors show. James Industries appeared to be the only American distributor that exhibited on their own with a huge display of equipment that covered all sectors of coin-op. James Ind. and Capcom, with Fionda-Zamperla were the three biggest exhibitors by far and they attracted real business.

SALEX '96 showed an expansion of over 30% on last year with only the gaming section being a bit weak, but this is probably because of the uncertainty and confusion that surrounds casinos and gaming in Brasil, which with it's huge population is the biggest single market.

It's obvious that over the past few years the South American market has not only matured, but moved quickly from being basically a secondary market to one of primary importance, and most visitors were quite confident that it will grow even more in the next few years.

Throughout the three day duration, crowds were constantly lined up to get into the big South American Expo in Sao Paulo

There were many hot items on display, but those that got the most attention through sheer weight of numbers were Konami's new Jet Ski simulator, which just by being introduced at SALEX emphasised the importance manufacturers are placing on the South American market, the SNK Neo Mini cranes, which were a huge hit and with all cranes still doing good business in the region, the mini's look set for a good future, and music.

Music machines were a big item, the Jukebox manufacturers, Rowe, Rock-Ola, NSM and Wurlitzer were all present and taking advantage of the upsurge in Jukeboxes that is currently sweeping the whole of South America.

All Jukebox companies reported good sales and great leads for future business and to back up those reports, we heard late in the show that Rock-Ola had booked four times the space they had this year, for SALEX '97.

Redemption games were also an item that received much more attention this year than last as South America embraces family entertainment in a big way. All major manufacturers were present in various local distributors booths and all that we spoke to were quite sure that Redemption is set to play a much bigger part in the South American market than it has to date.

Park Land, Brasil's largest operator and distributor, who also had a very large area at SALEX, are operating a lot of Redemption games very successfully in their bigger centres and are very 'bullish' on the ticket games, and Game Show, the growing Rio De Janeiro distributor and operator, who also had a large booth at SALEX featuring a lot of the ICE Inc Redemption games, are also looking to expand their Redemption operations.

Arte Somme who work with the big American distributor Mondial International in Brasil are another big distributor that are noticing increased inquiries for Redemption games and Mondial's Redemption business in other parts of South America has been on the increase for some time.

Game Show, run by the brothers Walter and Felipe Regino also had a very interesting item on their stand in the shape of a Nintendo 64, home game system featuring the incredible Super Mario 64 on a big 48 inch screen, and many, many operators studied the game with some trepidation, it's truly an awesome system and an awesome game.



Top: A section of the big Capcom stand and Bottom: The James Industries stand where they featured their new Wells Gardner Video Wall.



Back to Redemption and another big operator from northern Brasil, Perrene, who also operate hotels and resorts were one of the biggest, (if not the biggest) buyer of Redemption games at the show, and solid companies like Play Centre and Filistra are also expanding their range of Redemption games.

ICE Inc's Joe Coppola and Gene Brogowski who very cleverly shipped a couple of extra containers of stock to Brasil for SALEX, sold everything they had as well as taking some good orders for Home Run Derby, SkiMaxx and more of their redemption games, needless to say, they were very 'upbeat' about Redemption on the southern continent.

Lazer-Tron, Harry Levy, Coin Concepts, Skee ball inc were all well represented in the Redemption sector and all appeared to be doing good business.

Table games were also in strong demand and one of the biggest exhibitors of this type product, Recreativos Presas of Spain did a lot of excellent table business with their soccer and air hockey tables, and also their large range of cranes and merchandising games which are still doing well in South America, though not booming like they were.

Germany's Nova were also busy at SALEX with their fine range of air hockey tables and other products and though they didn't take much space this year, it seems certain they will go considerably bigger next year as South America is now a market that demands quality and the interest was high in the Nova products.

Smart Industries who displayed some of their products on the James Industries booth, got a good response to their Pit Stop crane at its first public showing and many of the local crane makers reported good business.

Kiddy Rides were another strong item, with Spain's Falgas prominent with a big booth full of their fine KR's, that also had their American Rodeo Bull in operation. The

bull was a huge success and it would seem that this great attraction will always have any number of "riders" seeking fame by riding the beast to a standstill. (The key to this one if you really want to beat it is quite simplebribe the operator to slow it down.)

EMT the German KR manufacturer also had a display of their good Kiddie Rides as well as good exposure on the big James Industries stand with several more rides.

Soft Play which is also becoming popular in



The smiles on ICE Inc's Joe Coppola and Gene Brogowski, seen here on the Game House stand, were there all the time, but we never knew for sure if they were from the business they were doing, or because of their lovely interpreters

South America was covered by Prime Play Systems who had a small but busy display and Omni through their local distributor. Both companies looked to be kept very busy.

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Marcel Marchardo on the Embra Kits stand was kept pretty busy.

In Park rides and attractions, local company Fionda had a large display that included products from Zamperla, Preston, Sartori and several other major manufacturers, and though we believe SALEX will continue to grow generally, it's this section which seems certain to see the bulk of future expansion.

As the show came to a close we heard that next year US manufacturer, Preston, plan on setting up a major ride at SALEX and we feel that once their competitors hear this, there could be several more companies do likewise.

Brasil is really getting into parks, there are five new amusement parks in various stages of

development around Sao Paulo alone at this time, and we don't think that is counting the \$200 million park that Park Land are planning.

And though Sao Paulo has a population that reaches 25 million in the business week is a huge city on any standards, it's still only one part of a very big country.

The moving theatre and big simulator people were also at SALEX checking out the market, both Simex and Thomson Entertainment worked small stands off brochures, etc this year, but the response they got and the good feeling about the market that was so evident, could see them go the whole hog next year and bring some equipment in.

So there was plenty of product other than big videos at SALEX though it was hard to get away from them as they were everywhere. Namco, through countless distributors must have had a hundred pieces scattered around the show, including their latest games like Prop Cycle and Alpine Surfer, and Sega were not far behind, though though they done it tough trying to offload Indy 500's and Manx TT's.

Williams Midway also had a huge presence on local distributors stands with Cruis'n USA in particular. There was so many pieces of this excellent game that we started a count at one stage, but gave it up after reaching 30, and from what we can gather all were sold at the show, which says plenty for this 2 year old game.

Apart from the big Konami Jet ski simulator Wave Shark, which was probably the hit of the show as far as video games go, the games that attracted the most interest were Alpine Racer, Prop Cycle, Dirt Dash, Time Crisis, Gunblade NY and the evergreen drivers, Daytona, Rally Champ and Cruis'n USA.

The enthusiasm of the Brasilian operators at SALEX for all these quite costly products was in a way surprising as the country is going through a radical economic change that is making business in most quarters a bit difficult.

Quite a few small businesses and banks have been crushed recently by of all things, the good shape of Brasilian economy. Many businesses that had learned to live comfortably with forever rising inflation and sinking currency exchange, have found it impossible to adjust to an economy where the inflation rate is pretty steady and the currency stays solid, with the Brasilian Real staying on par with the US dollar.



Top: Steve Ward from Fabtec Inc who are marketing the Data East line in the international market writes another order. *Centre:* Dan McAllister and George Haydock on the Rock-Ola stand. *Bottom:* Rowe's Joel Friedman with a pair of Venus's



Top: Part of the Park Land stand where Konami's four big Wave Sharks were the centre of attention throughout the show.

Bottom: Behind this wall of people at the SNK stand are a row of Neo Mini cranes that drew crowds like this for the full three days.

In conversion videos, SNK attracted good crowds with their Neo Geo games, particularly King of Fighters '96. The strength of Neo Geo in Brasil and other parts of South America continues to increase as does the respect operators have for the company who are doing quite incredible business considering the current state of the market. Mr Kawasaki, SNK's chief visited Brasil for the show and he'd have to be pretty happy with the way the company is doing.

Though Capcom had a full range of their games on display in their customary, huge stand, they relied mainly on their good Street Fighter game Alpha 2, and Super Marvel Heroes which has proved to be a bit of a 'sleeper' in several markets. They also had a good display of their Pinballs which were popular with Brasil being one of the few markets in the world where Pinballs are earning reasonable money. James Industries also had a large display of Pinballs and most of the major distributors like Arte Somme, and Park Land also had pins on display.

World Wide Distributors from San Diego also wrote some good orders for their shooting game, Striker 1945, while Marcello Macharda and Ramon Gili's Embra Kits did some good business in videos on their large stand which also exhibited a good range of all types of coin-op machine and a very clever Draft Beer trolley which the company are also marketing.

Redemption and crane merchandise was another area that was well represented with PMS having a very big display, the local company Play-by-Play owned by former Pizza Hut king, Arturo Torres, who appeared to be doing some good business and several other smaller displays by Oriental Trading and others.

And Gumball machines were also popular with Dr X.I.Tings Gumbotron that's being distributed by Fabtek of the USA, a big hit, and the popular A&A Co/Parkway machines of all sizes attracting a lot of interest.

Though we mention Brasil a lot in this report it must be understood that SALEX is now fully representative to the whole of South America, we couldn't get a break up prior to going to print, but it was very noticeable that the show had drawn a great number of operators from Argentina, Chile and even a few from Columbia and Venuzaela. We spoke to people from all over the continent while down there and wrote a hell of a lot of subscriptions as well.

Chile right now is probably the most buoyant market on the continent and it's also growing fast so we at Cash Box were pleased when we were able to get the President of the Chilean Operators Association, Esteban Geyger Malaith, to represent Cash Box in that country and act as our correspondent in Chile. An old friend in Jorge Mochkovsky from Argentina's Sacao who also make the excellent cashless machine system,"Playcard", also dropped by our booth and he's going to do a bit for us about Argentina in coming months.

This was a very fruitful trip for us as apart from writing a stack of subscriptions and picking up Esteban and Jorge, we found that our mate from Mondial, Bruce Sarkisan has a degree in Journalism and forever the gentleman, has been waiting to be asked to write something for Cash Box. We soon fixed that up, and asked him, so Bruce is going to join the growing list of people that have countless years of experience in the industry, of Cash Box correspondents. (Maybe we'll get by without our lovely Sidah who is leaving Cash Box to travel for a couple of years, after all)

Back to the show, and it's impossible to write about SALEX without giving the organisers a pat on the back. There were a few gliches, and a few grumbles from exhibitors, but hey man, this is Brasil that we're talking about, and though I and a lot of others have come to love the country, no one would ever deny that it's a bit hard to get things done quick there.

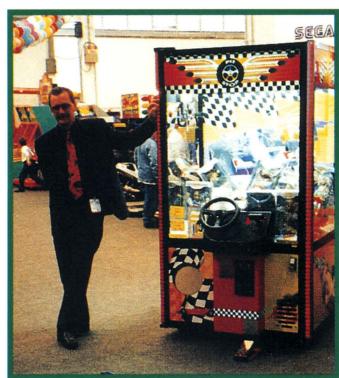


Above: Smart Industries Mike Smith with the company's new Pit Stop Crane.

Below: Part of the big Falgas Industrias Kiddie Ride display.



SNK chief Mr Kawazaki flanked by Marty Kitazawa (President SNK USA) and Shigeo Aoki (President SNK Brasil)



Above: Smart Industries Mike Smith with the company's new Pit Stop Crane.

Below: Part of the big Falgas Industrias Kiddie Ride display.

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We got caught last year with getting our magazines there on time so this year we shipped early and the magazines were in Brasil eight days prior to the show's opening, but we still didn't get them on the stand till mid afternoon of the second day, and we have the best man in Brasil looking after our interests, in Joao Ghani.

Things don't always happen like they maybe should in beautiful Brasil, so for Roberto Selles and Steve Whatmore's gang from World's Fair Exhibitions (publishers of Euroslot magazine) to get a show of this size up and running with as few problems as there were, is almost miraculous.

And even those who had the problems and a bit of an early grumble, were the first to praise the organisers for the way they accepted the prob-

lems as their own and quickly moved to rectify them without any hassle or fuss.

The biggest problem SALEX appears to have is the venue, it's not hard to look forward to next year and see Sao Paulo's Mart Centre as being too small to accommodate the show. we believe the organisers are looking at other Sao Paulo venues while there is a bit of a push on from other Brasilians to move the show to Rio De Janeiro, a location that would certainly look good to foreign visitors. We got the impression that Worlds Fair

could possibly be persuaded to go to Rio, but it would probably take a couple of bulldozers to move Roberto Selles out of his beloved Sao Paulo.

So all in all SALEX '96 was a very good show, good for South America and good for the industry on a whole. As we mentioned earlier the attitude of operators is

magnificent and if we could find a way to bottle it and sell it, I'm sure we could make a fortune. South American operators don't get into that doom and gloom crap that's pervading so many parts of the coin-op world, they just do what they have to do and make a point of enjoying what they do. If something goes wrong, they fix it, and probably laugh about it while they are doing it, they don't just complain to whoever will listen, and their enthusiasm for the industry is a joy for this old geezer to behold. *The industry in South America looks to be in good hands to us.*

NUESTRO AGRADECIMIENTO

Me gustaría agradecer a los operadores Brasileros y Sud Americanos por la excelente hospitalidad que, una vez más me fue ofrecida en mi reciente visita a San Pablo, y también deseo agradecer infinitivamente por el increíble apoyo que nosotros, la revista Cash Box International, recibimos en Sud América.

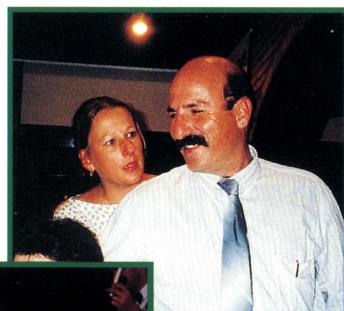
Una vez más nos fuimos de Brasil con un número record de suscripciones, principalmente gracias al excelente trabajo de mi muy buen amigo y hermano, Joao Ghani y su admirable familia, cuyos esfuerzos en nombre de Cash Box me dejaron completamente "en el aire".

Las palabras, nunca pueden recompensar a esta increíble familia brasiliense, que me han llevado a su hogar y me han incorporado en sus corazones como un miembro más de su familia, lo que ha logrado que yo adopte un gran cariño por Brasil que me acompañará toda la vida y siempre estaré en deuda con ellos.

El poder visitar Brasil cada año, gracias a SALEX bajo el lema del "trabajo" es algo de lo que yo estoy tremadamente agradecido y no me lo perdería por todo el oro del mundo, y por ésto les debo a los organizadores, Roberto Selles de Games News y a Steve Whatmore de Euroslot; dos tipos que en cierto sentido son nuestros competidores;

mi más sincero agradecimiento por la invitación que permite que Cash Box llegue a SALEX, y por su amistad, ayuda y cooperación.

Gracias a Uds, Sud. América,
Jack Rodios



The winning Brasilian Cash Box team, top right: Marlee and Joao Ghani, and above: Joao's daughter Monique (right) and Marriane. No wonder we did good at SALEX.

SEIDEL:

Keep Rollin' Out the Good Games

Smokin Token has lived permanently at the top of the Roll Down Redemption charts basically since it hit the streets. The company responsible for that game is Seidel Amusements, a company that's been in the business for thirty five years and knows redemption inside out. Smokin' Token made its debut at ACME in 1995 when Seidel exhibited multiple copies of the game and nothing else. It was a good introduction for a game which has dominated its sector of the market ever since.

Now Seidel have released another great looking, coin roll down, titled Goin Rollin' which is similar in play to Smokin Token and coloured black, to sit handsomely next to the white of Smokin Token. It's a roller blades themed game in which players roll tokens down a chute, over a jump and up through the air toward a rotating wheel that opens a series of coin slots. A "Ticket Multiplier" is a feature which increases payouts every second, third or fourth consecutive miss.

Therefore, amateurs are encouraged as they gain experience and experts keep dropping coins to go for the high ticket amounts.

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With Smokin Token, Seidel well and truly proved that when it comes to ROI on redemption, they take it just about as high as rolling down gets. Goin Rollin will arrive at a gallop on the back of Smokin Token and carry on from where that game remains.

Ed and Phyllis Seidel have created a long line of redemption classics which include Bing-o-Reno, Pokereno, Twenty-One, Quakers, Dino-Roll and Lite A Line.

You can safely expect the classics to keep rollin' out of this family company with redemption in their blood.



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SALEX '96

The Party

One of the highlights of SALEX is the Friday night Party that for the last two years has been held at a top rated Sao Paulo restaurant that's name was in the memory banks until about one or two o'clock Saturday morning, but has not been there since.

No matter, it's a huge, but great restaurant and this year the Party (you don't normally give the word 'party' a capital 'P', but this do is something special) was sponsored by Capcom



who have a large presence in Brasil under their own name and the Romstar banner which we thought had been discontinued, but found it prominently displayed around the show and Party.

I'm sure that Brasilians and the other South Americans who attended the Party, work hard in their businesses, but boy, they sure play hard too.

But before the playing comes the feast, and these blokes know how to 'feast' too, the quality and quantity

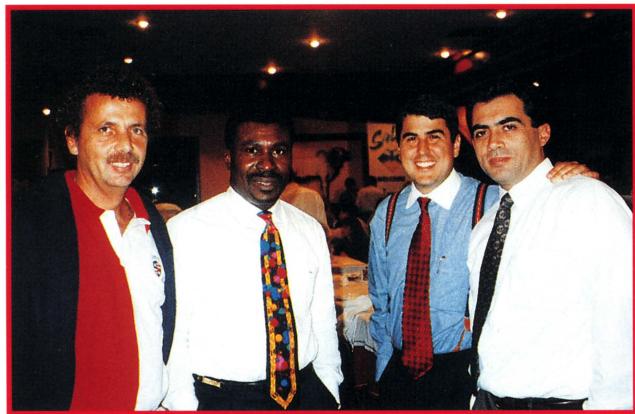
of food available to the 200 or 300 guests present was staggering, the finest meat in the world (with maybe the exception of the Australian meat) was served non stop from the spit, served straight off the knife onto your plate, and it was magnificent.

A gallon or two of wine and a couple of snorts of something else to wash it down and any problems encountered through the day were quickly forgotten as were most other things, the mood was set for everyone in the place to have a good time.

Just try and imagine Games News editor, Roberto Selles publicly singing over a mike and you'll get some idea of a fun night out



*Top: Games News editor Roberto Selles "singing"
Above: A "before" shot of Steve Whatmore, you wouldn't really want to see the "after"*



Above: Ago Mensai and the Mondial guys get the coats off with Esteban Mailath wondering what he's getting into with a bunch of happy distributors.



No Brasilian Party would be complete without the beautiful dancing girls and Capcom didn't let anyone down on this score either.

in Sao Paulo. It's lucky Roberto is a good businessman, he'd go broke overnight if he tried a singing career.

But Brasilians make a point of enjoying life, that's why they don't let business get them down, and they don't worry about tomorrow till tomorrow comes. Have you ever heard the ode from the old philosopher Homer? It goes;

*Happy the man and happy he alone
He who can call today his own
He, who deep within can say
Tomorrow do your worst
For I have lived today*

Well for years I've followed that creed, thinking all the time that old Homer was a Greek, but I'm telling you now he wasn't no Greek, he was a Brasilian, you can put your money on that.



Above: The ICE Inc and Game House teams enjoy a tequilaor 2

The hospitality shown visitors to Brasil at functions like the Party is quite incredible, there's no pretensions or any of that crap, you can't help but genuinely feel welcome, and that's a very good feeling to have.



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SALEX '96

The Party



Top: The Cash Box ladies join in the fun (they didn't really want to strangle Marriane)
Bottom: Rock-Ola's Dan Mcallister gets a great kick out of George Jayoc being "set up"

OK, back to the Party, the night goes on, and yeah man..... it's time to bring on the dancing girls, and what dancing girls they are, every one of them has more moves than a Chess Grandmaster, it's almost hypnotic and an experience that you shouldn't miss.

A quick look around finds our host Steve Whatmore just about off his face, but what the Hell, so was everyone else anyway. Normally 'Po' faced businessmen and women of the British and American variety are laughing and joking like they too believe there's no tomorrows, it's very catchy this Brasilian way of life, and no one is really immune.

Marcel from Embra, is signalling to come and have a drink.....Rock-Ola's Dan McAllister is trying to set up a joke on George Jayoc with Cash Box's lovely Monique and Marriane.....Ago Mensai from Ago's

Distributing is trying to be serious with Mondial's Bruce Sarkisan, but soon gives up and has another drink.....The Goiania gang from Video Press are warming up.....Roberto has thankfully stopped singing.....The combined Euroslot and Worlds Fair Exhibitions crew are resigned to having a hard day tomorrow.....is that a bloke from Euroslot dancing on the table in his jocks.....is he going to drop the jocks?"Have a drink you old bastard"

says Whatmore.....Joao Ghani is everywhere, probably still flogging Cash Box subscriptions.....Marlee and Monique Ghani are strangling Marriane.....oh well.....ICE Inc's Joe Coppola on his first trip to Brasil and his second jug of tequila says he's not going home....."We can't both stay here" says Gene Brogowski as he pours another tequila.....Game House's Felipe Regina was going home to Rio at 6 o'clock, here he is at midnight still in Sao Paulo....."Maybe tomorrow" says he as brother Walter shrugs the shoulders and pours another....."Have a drink" says Atari's Masao Ohata....."Have a drink" says Euroslot's Jo Hall, who's first job at Euroslot was last years SALEX, and has come a long way since.....And there's

"Marcello the desperate" again.....geez, the camera's stuffed.....oh well, I tried to do some reporting.....yeah, I'll have one with you mate, what the Hell.....We're in Brasil.

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CBI MAGAZINE'S MONTHLY COVERAGE OF
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United States

EXLINE COMPLETES DAYTONA USA THEMED ATTRACTION

David Exline, principal of Exline Design Services, has completed his latest project: Daytona USA. It is a 50,000 square foot, multi-faceted, participatory and interactive motor sports themed attraction at the Daytona International Speedway. The experience opened in July to co-incide with the Pepsi 400 NASCAR, Winston Cup Race.

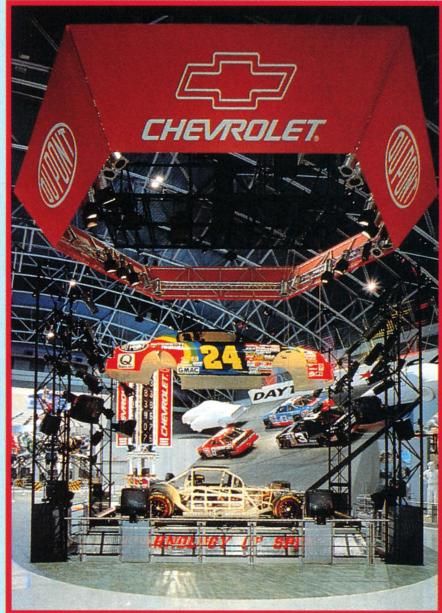
"I was pleased to have the opportunity to work with the people at the Daytona International Speedway," said David Exline who was responsible for bringing the overall design into completion. "Daytona is the heartbeat of the NASCAR racing circuit and is known in the ranks of motor sports as the world centre of racing. Daytona USA, as an entertainment venue, had a challenging reputation to live up to."

The project began in 1993 and took two and a half years to complete. According to Exline, the response from people who have seen it has been just phenomenal. Exline worked with Rouse/Wyatt Associates in developing the detailed design of the attractions. Some of the many exhibits conceived by those parties are:

- a re-creation of Daytona International Speedway's famous twin tunnels featuring videos of fast-moving images conveying the wide range of motor sports activities at Daytona.

- The "Heritage of Daytona", featuring display panels and video monitors tracing the days of stock car racing on the beach of Daytona to the creation of the Daytona International Speedway to the present.
- "The Technology of Speed", a mechanised system that dissects a full-scale race car and exposes the different components and sub-structures while 10 video monitors correspond with the "unveiling". At the end of the show the car "re-assembles itself" in front of the guests.
- "Daytona Time Trials" - eight interactive work stations where guests set up their own computer rendition of a race car, then get a read-out of how their car performed in a one-lap test around Daytona International Speedway.
- "Heroes of the Track" - an up-close and personal look, through video, at today's most well-known stock car racers through a series of eight interactive stations with touch sensitive monitors.
- "The Daytona 500" - a large screen format film that provides an insider's view of activity on the day of NASCAR's premier racing event.

In all, there are over 20 exhibits and attractions at Daytona USA and they have attracted great numbers since opening.



United Arab Emirates

THIRD WATERPARK FOR UAE

Action Park of Spain has announced the opening of the first phase of their Dreamland Waterpark in Umm Al Quwain, UAE, about half an hour's drive from Dubai. Eventually expected to cover over 200,000 square metres, Dreamland is to be completed in three stages and be fully operational by 1998.

Dreamland has plans to include a variety of swimming pools for children and adults, a hot and cold water jacuzzi, a 70 metre wave pool and water sports activities. A 2,000 capacity open-air theatre as well as a range of restaurants and coffee shops will also be built as the park progresses.

The park will be able to receive up to 500,000 visitors in its current state of development, at around 8,000 per day.

The Arab Emirates will have three waterparks very soon, with the opening of a new facility on the site of the former Chicago Beach Hotel expected shortly and Wonderland, the new theme park in central Dubai that's due to open this month which also has several major water attractions..

Egypt

FOUR NEW PARKS CURRENTLY UNDER DEVELOPMENT AS EGYPT MOVES AHEAD

At least four new parks are currently under construction in Egypt, making the amusements industry one of the fastest growing in the country.

The first two, "Dreamland" and "Media City" are being built close to one another near Cairo. Media Production City is a government-backed venture along the lines of Universal Studios and in addition to the public amusement park, will include working facilities for the country's growing film and broadcasting networks covering over 1 million square metres.

Another project, called "Geroland", is being built by the Egyptian Engineering Company who have already placed orders for rides, including one of Vekoma's Boomerang rollercoasters. The fourth new park is being planned by the Egyptian Marketing & Services Company: it will be an 8,000 square metre venue in Mansoura, and the company intend going ahead with a second development when Mansoura is completed.

These attractions are in addition to those operated by the Shamalco organisation which already runs five parks throughout Egypt.

LASER STORM'S REACTOR POD BRINGS NEW ADVERSARY TO THE GAME

Laser Storm has introduced a new feature to its games: the Reactor Pod. Not only can players score additional points by de-activating the Pods, but the Pods can fire back de-activating players when they least expect it.

According to Eric Schwartzman, Laser Storm's VP of marketing, "Laser Storm's Reactor Pods change the gameplay, creating an experience which is always fresh and exciting, even to the most avid repeat player."

The Pods are programmable through Laser Storm's Stormtrak computer system. Operators can decide the amount of time which elapses between the dormant and active periods of the Pod. When the Pod is ready to fire a rapid and vibrant lighting effect signals a warning. The player has to deactivate the Reactor Pod before they are deactivated themselves by the Pod's far reaching beams

Operators also have the option of adding pods to increase the challenge of the game and each unit is themed in keeping with the overall look of the arena.



COMPACT THRILL RIDE HITS THE MARKET

Skytrak Warp 1, from engineers DCF Hickman, could extend the "white knuckle" market from big amusement parks into smaller sites and even indoor spaces. It's an aerial thriller that gives the feel of Superman-style horizontal flying. The concept is brought to life by suspending the user in a horizontal, open-front pod with arm and footrests, similar to hang-gliding.

The pods are suspended beneath a monorail that "flies" the user around the leisure site. The difference from most "white knuckle" rides is that the thrills don't depend on the size and speed of the structure. DCF Hickman describe it as ideal for a low-cost, high thrill ride experience. The ride can be made to any size and has the potential to be fitted in many different locations. One idea that the manufacturers are promoting is kids soaring around beneath the domed roofs of combined shopping and leisure malls, while their parents are down below, shopping.

SIMEX TAKES JAPANESE KIDS BACK TO THE DINOSAUR AGE

SimEx Inc is supplying a 30-seat electric simulator cabin and 70mm film "The Ultimate Earth Ride" to the Children's Summer Camp Expo in Sapporo, Japan. Produced and programmed exclusively for SimEx simulators, the film recreates the Earth as it was 4.6 billion years ago, dinosaurs and all.

"Our simulators help provide an extraordinary experience," says Michael Needham, of SimEx. "Because our simulators are so responsive, they allow for both subtle and extreme motions that mimic all the film actions accurately. The result is a totally sensory experience."

The Children's Summer Camp Expo is organised by the Sapporo Chamber of Commerce, sponsored by both Provincial and Municipal government agencies, the Board of Education and many large corporations.



Editorial Sidah Russell

As this month's magazine is featuring video games, I thought I might make a few comments on that related attraction: virtual reality.

VR is at an interesting stage of its development. As a concept it's been around for a while now and, frankly, many operators who have purchased virtual reality systems have been a little disappointed with their earnings.

Many of the early VR sites are now looking old and tired, and even some of the newer ones are finding business a bit tough. There are various reasons for this, including low attendance, not enough repeat business, the high cost of the equipment, a lack of really good software, and just setting up the wrong kind of VR concept in the first place.

This hasn't put off the manufacturers, however - at last year's IAAPA Show the VR suppliers were out in force with a wide range of products, and this year should be no different. While the technology is definitely improving, and prices are coming down, VR needs a real "hit" game before it can take on the arcade games.

The quality of the best arcade games, with their dedicated cabinets and immersive gameplay, make it difficult for virtual reality to compete. After paying for the first game out of curiosity, players are generally hesitant to fork out another \$5 when they can get better graphics and gameplay from something like Virtua Cop 2.

The real success with virtual reality comes from having a really good concept. It's not enough to just place a VR machine in the middle of a games room and hope it earns well.

The LBE centres have got the idea and the heavily themed concepts like Magic Edge and Virtual World Entertainment's Battle Tech and Red Mars are still doing well after several years of operation. These types of places offer both a pre-show and a post-game analysis so players feel they are getting value for money.

The VR "pods" or "planes" are set up so a number of players can compete against each other, and a printed statistics sheet lets them compare their results. A complex level of gameplay is another secret ingredient: as players become more skilled, they are given access to more equipment and are able to complete harder tasks. This leads to lots of repeat play as players don't become bored with the game. Enterprising centres also organise league competitions for their more dedicated customers.

And there are plenty of other ideas being developed within the industry.

After closing all but one of their virtual reality centres earlier this year, CyberMind Interactive are planning to re-enter the US market with a VR-cafe concept. The company believes that visitors to a cafe environment stay longer and spend more. While they do come to check out the latest in hi-tech, the real attraction is the social atmosphere. Eshcol Interactive, a Singapore-based company, also has its own VR-cafe up and running. If successful, they plan to franchise the concept throughout Asia.

Other companies with plans include United Artists (the US cinema chain) with their Starport centres and Skyline Multimedia Entertainment with its Cyber/Internet cafe planned for New York's Times Square district. All these concepts place VR in the centre of a hi-tech but very social environment, and based on the form of Magic Edge and Virtual World Entertainment, they should be fairly successful.

While the day when virtual reality becomes more popular than the best video games is still a few years off, VR can be successful as a long-term attraction.

What's needed is a good concept, some nice theming and great atmosphere.

This is my last column for Cash Box as I am travelling round the world for the next few years, but I'm going to miss this industry very much and I wish every one of you, everything you wish yourselves, you've been great, and I thank you, from the heart. Sidah

 Como la edición de este mes de la revista está destacando los video juegos, pensé que debería realizar algunos comentarios sobre la atracción relacionada con estos: Realidad Virtual.

Los VR están en un nivel muy interesante de su desarrollo. Como concepto ya ha estado en el mercado durante un tiempo prudencial y, francamente, muchos operadores que han adquirido sistemas de realidad virtual están un poco desilusionados con sus ganancias.

Muchos de los primeros centros de VR ya se ven viejos y gastados, e incluso algunos de los más nuevos están descubriendo que el hacer negocios es un poco duro. Existen varios motivos para que ésto sea así, incluyendo la baja asistencia de jugadores, pocas buenas transacciones comerciales, los altos costos de los equipos, la falta de un realmente buen software, y, principalmente el hecho de simplemente ubicar erróneamente el concepto de VR.

Esto, sin embargo, no ha desanimado a los fabricantes - en la exposición IAAPA del año pasado los distribuidores de VR exponían una muy variada gama de productos, y este año no debería ser distinto. Mientras que, por un lado, la tecnología, sin duda alguna está mejorando, y los precios están bajando, VR necesita un juego que realmente "golpee" antes de poder ocupar un lugar preponderante en el mercado de Salones de Juegos.

La calidad de los mejores juegos de Salón, con sus cabinas dedicadas y los juegos inmersivos, hacen que sea difícil para los VR entrar en competencia. Después de jugar por primera vez, sólo por curiosidad, a los jugadores les cuesta mucho volver a sacar \$ 5.- para una jugada, cuando por el mismo dinero pueden tener mejores gráficos y jugadas más excitantes con algo como Virtua Cop 2.

El verdadero éxito con Realidad Virtual llega al tener un concepto realmente bueno. No es suficiente el solo hecho de ubicar una máquina VR en el medio de un salón lleno de juegos y sentarse a esperar que produzca buenas ganancias.

Los Centros LBE poseen el concepto y la idea profunda de que juegos temáticos como Battle Tech y Red Mars de Magic Edge y Virtual

World Entertainment aún funcionan bien después de varios años de operación. Este tipo de lugares ofrecen tanto un análisis de pre-exhibición como de después-de-jugada de forma tal que, los jugadores sienten que están recibiendo algo a cambio de su dinero.

Las "manadas" o "grupos" de VR están ubicados de forma tal que un número de jugadores pueden competir unos contra otros, y una hoja con estadísticas impresas les permite comparar sus resultados. El nivel complejo de jugada es otro ingrediente secreto: a medida de que los jugadores se van haciendo más hábiles, pueden acceder a más equipamiento y pueden completar tareas más arduas. Esto lleva a que muchos jugadores repitan las jugadas ya que no se aburren con el juego.

Los Centros de grandes cadenas también organizan competencias y certámenes para sus mejores clientes.

Y se están desarrollando muchas otras ideas dentro de la industria.

Después de cerrar todos, menos uno de los centros de realidad virtual a principio de éste año, CyberMind Interactive están planeando re-ingresar en el mercado estadounidense con el concepto de Cafés-VR. La empresa cree que los visitantes a un medio ambiente como un café se quedan en el mismo, por mayor tiempo y también gastan más. Mientras que los mismos, vienen a observar lo último en tecnología de avanzada, la atracción verdadera es la atmósfera social del lugar. Eshcol Interactive, una empresa de Singapur, también tiene su propio café VR funcionando. Si resulta exitoso, ellos quieren otorgar la licencia para operar éste concepto en toda Asia.

En Argentina están comenzando a surgir los primeros Centros VR en shoppings y aunque el concepto de Internet es muy reciente ya hay unos 4/5 Cafés Cibernéticos/Internet funcionando en Buenos Aires.

Otras compañías con planes incluyen a United Artists (la cadena de cines de Estados Unidos) con sus Centros Starport y Skyline Multimedia Entertainment, con su ya planeado café Cibernético/Internet para el distrito central de Square Times en Nueva York. Todo éstos conceptos ubican a VR en el centro de la tecnología de avanzada, y basándose en la formatos de Magic Edge y Virtual World, deberían resultar bastante exitosos.

Mientras que todavía resulta lejano el día en el que la realidad virtual sea más popular que los mejores video juegos, los VR pueden resultar en una atracción exitosa en el futuro a largo plazo. Lo que se necesita es un buen concepto, la elección de un buen tema y una gran atmósfera.



PLAYSCAPE SYSTEMS INTRODUCES NEW SOFT PLAY COMPONENTS

Playscape Systems is trying to be innovative with their soft modular play equipment and have a couple of very interesting components to launch. While they will still be promoting the brightly coloured tubes, nets, ball pools and crash mats, the company feels that all soft play areas are beginning to look the same.

Playscape have a new attraction called the GyroCopter, a module which fits into existing play structures. Kids sit in it and use a joystick to move it up, down and around like a static helicopter before moving onto other areas of the play structure. "Yo Yo Ball", a vertical play maze, and "Baja Bounce" are other modules which the company hopes will give their equipment extra "playability".

Australia

VENTURER DOWN UNDER

Thomson Entertainment have moved a number of their Venturer S2 simulators (pictured at right) to Leisure and Allied Industries, the Australian owner of the Timezone arcade chain.

The first two machines were installed at Timezone's Bourke and Swanson Street arcades in the heart of Melbourne, with the remaining three machines installed at popular suburban locations. In the coming months a further six machines are destined for various Timezone locations in NSW.

The Venturer S2's were supplied to Timezone by Thrillseekers Australia, Thomson's Australian and New Zealand distributor. The simulator is ideal for smaller locations like arcades as it is coin-operated and designed to be used without an attendant.

Being only a two-seated machine, the Venturer S2 doesn't take up too much room, but it still delivers a high impact ride experience. Customers can choose from five rides and the latest laser disc includes the computer graphics spectacular Volcano Mine Ride, live action thrillers Pepsi Max - The Big One and Yamaha.



CHAIN OF CHILDREN'S EDUTAINMENT CENTRES TO BE MODELLED ON "THE PUZZLE PLACE"

The White Hutchinson Leisure and Learning Group has been selected to produce a prototype children's edutainment centre, based on the hit PBS pre-school television series "The Puzzle Place". The initial facility is targeted to open in the northwest suburbs of Chicago in Mundelein, Illinois, in early 1997. The chain of centres will be owned by Lancit Media Productions, KCET/Los Angeles and MCEC Enterprises (a Chicago-based FEC management and investor consortium).

The first Puzzle Place centre will include 25,000 square feet inside space and 9,000 square foot outdoor adventure play garden. Indoor activities will include arts and crafts studios, a maze, interactive cooking, live performances and a Puzzle Place store and include a featured event that will link the indoor and outdoor spaces is "Puzzleville", a child-scaled village for pretend and imaginary play.

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Myanmar

WHERE A MOVING ESCALATOR IS NEW TECHNOLOGY

Myanmar (formerly Burma) is a country that has changed significantly over recent years and though it's only moving slowly to shake off the shackles of the past, it's now starting to look more seriously at entertainment for the people, particularly the youth of the country who are embracing technology and western consumer products whenever the opportunity arises.

Moves to open up the country are underway and amusement machines and other forms of, particularly electronic entertainment are now starting to be accepted, which is a big step forward in a country where moving escalators in the new Shwedagon Pagoda shopping centre are considered 'new technology' and still elicit screams of alarm from first time patrons.

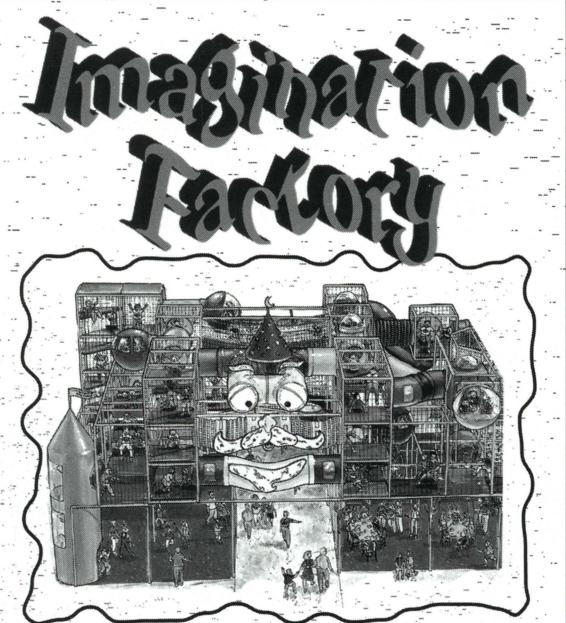
Several family entertainment type centres, small on world standards, are reportedly being planned for Yangon, the capital city, and the cen-



Burmese youths get stuck into Virtua Cop at a Yangon shopping centre

tre of the 'reformist movement', but the unstable nature of the country's politics will probably hold back any major expansion in this type of facility for some time yet.

While the political future is still uncertain for Myanmar, the images of modern society are nevertheless becoming a more common sight and among the youth of the country, a feeling of optimism prevails.



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Conference

AUSTRALIA'S THEMED ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE CONFERENCE

AIC Conferences will be hosting Australia's first Themed Entertainment & Leisure conference between September 25 to 27, 1996... and where better to stage this event than at the Gold Coast's magnificent Seaworld Nara Resort.

At what promises to be a most comprehensive forum for entertainment and leisure professionals, the conference will feature some of the industry's leading local and international players.

Major themed facilities are now a reality throughout retail centres, theme parks, cinema and entertainment complexes and tourist spots. There is little doubt that interactive entertainment will continue to grow as new concepts and technologies are developed, yet no one has really evaluated how successful themed entertainment has been.

Many agree that there is certainly a need for quantified information to encourage this new phenomenon in Australia. AIC hopes to make this information available at their Themed Entertainment & Leisure event, where the results of many local and international case studies will be presented. The delegates will get to learn the pros and cons of integrating innovative entertainment facilities to create a brand new consumer experience and see whether specific Australian projects have generated a return.

AIC believe it will be a very unique event particularly designed for all leisure and entertainment professionals interested in exploiting this growing trend. For conference details and further information, contact AIC on +61 (0)2 9210 5777 or Fax: +61 (0)2 9223 8216

Laser Games

LASER STORM'S INFLATABLE TAKES OFF AT STARFEST

Laser Storm, manufacturers of themed laser tag games has created an inflatable arena based on their popular Circuit Commandos theme. The inflatable made an appearance among the Klingons and Star Trek Voyager crew members at Starfest '96, a unique sci-fi event held each year in the United States.

"Trekkies" gathered at the event to attend autograph sessions, watch movie studio previews, enter Star Trek trivia contests, and experience Laser Storm's laser tag arena. Eric Schwartzman, Laser Storm's VP of marketing and design, commented: "Starfest provided the perfect venue for our inflatable attraction. It gives science fiction fans of all ages a chance to step inside a futuristic atmosphere and become part of the action."

The Circuit Commandos inflatable arena transports the player to the inside of a giant computer where a dangerous virus is threatening the world's economy. Players have to deactivate the virus as they dodge their way through circuit boards barriers. The arena features an "Olympic-type" firm matted floor, a firmer, safer option than bouncy inflatable ones.



Little Tikes & Omni - One Year Older!

At the upcoming round of trade shows you will notice that Omni, the big soft play manufacturer, will be joined by the excellent range of Little Tikes products. You will see the two brand names on their combined booths at the LIW Show in Birmingham, Ubravert in France, the Park Show in Italy and of course at that mother of all trade shows, IAAPA in New Orleans.

It's now approaching a year since Omni joined the Little Tikes division of Rubbermaid and the two product ranges have complemented each other very well. Little Tikes is a household name through its quality range of toys and few children can resist jumping on the bigger versions of these "toys" when they see them around an Omni soft play area.

The merger also co-incided with the major international launch of Omni into Europe, the Middle East and Africa so it has been a big year for the company.

The last year of international operation has seen the addition of sales persons, designers, installation crews, co-ordinators - and of course, clients to the Little Tikes/Omni team. Playgrounds have been installed in the UK, France, Spain, Greece, Finland, South Africa, Israel, Egypt, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates - with others rolling off the production line at this moment.

The company now has representatives in all the above countries, as well as many others like Germany and Holland.

Little Tikes/Omni have also extended beyond their own product lines with a made-to-order service which covers restaurants, family entertainment centres and theme parks. Other more specialised outlets such as airports, supermarkets and private residences demonstrate the breadth of their market penetration.

The expansion of the Little Tikes/Omni has also meant looking at strategic centres throughout the world for manufacturing plants. The goal is to create plants that can manufacture the thousands of components that make up a Little Tikes/Omni play area so customers all over the world can receive their equipment in the shortest possible time at the cheapest possible price. The company aims to be as efficient with their custom made orders as other companies are with their "off the shelf" items.

Of course, taking your products to the international market presents its own challenges. Design standards and safety requirements are all part of the "hidden service" and Little Tikes/Omni has ensured all their equipment meets the fire, safety and struc-

tural standards required by the American, British, German and French governments as an absolute minimum.

In many cases these standards are exceeded so that children of any nationality can enjoy their equipment in safety.

As mentioned before, Little Tikes/Omni will be showing their wares at the upcoming round of trade shows and they will have a host of international representatives at the two big ones - IAAPA and ATEI.

After all, what better way to greet potential

customers than with someone from Omni who understands the client's market and who speaks the language?

On the other hand, Omni also sends someone from its International Division to support overseas representatives at the various local trade shows all over the world.

These regular meetings allow the transfer of ideas back to the company's corporate headquarters in California, USA. As a result, Omni's design, production line and customer support processes can be constantly updated to reflect world trends.

So while Little Tikes and Omni are only celebrating their first year together as a team, the two product lines have both been leaders in the children's play industry for some time. The combined strength of the two products, along with their push into the international market, should see plenty of Little Tikes and Omni equipment being installed all around the world.

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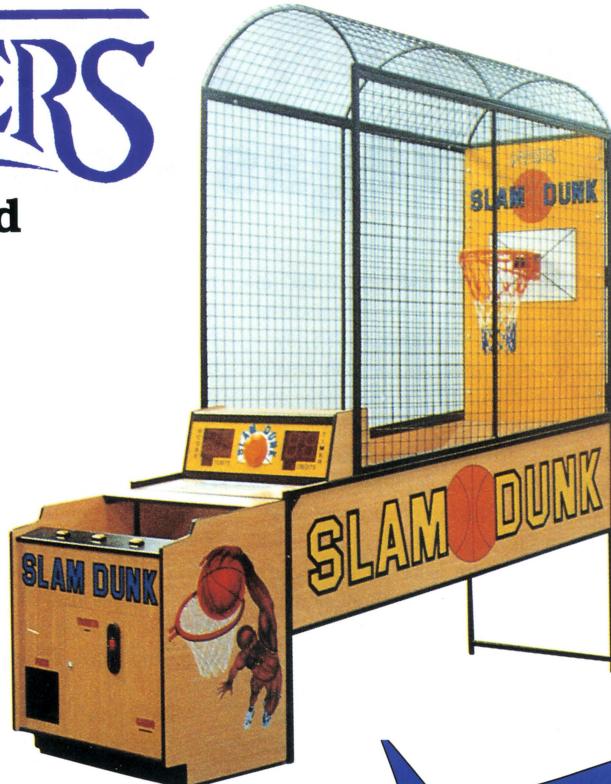
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Play FUN EXPO '96 at Las Vegas - and Win!

Few people expect to find a "sure bet" in Las Vegas, but Fun Expo - the International Family Fun Centre and Miniature Golf Show - is usually a win-win situation for both buyers and vendors alike. As FEC's seek new and unusual attractions to stay competitive, Fun Expo continues to grow with innovative exhibits geared specifically for these venues.

This year's show, taking place at the Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas October 10-12, will present 400 companies in 1,000 booths, including the first-ever outdoor pavilion showing inflatables and other portable attractions.

"The evolution of the exhibit floor over the past 6 years has been remarkable," said Bailey Beeken, show manager. "Classic favourites like miniature golf, go-karts, soft playground and bumperboats now stand shoulder-to-shoulder with every kind of vide game, laser game and virtual reality."

This year's show will also feature many new food products, costume companies and operational systems, "because attendees are seeking these products as part of expansion and diversification plans," said Beeken.

The number 1 trade show for FEC's has also become a key buying trip for bowling centres, skating rinks, recreation centres, LBE's, family restaurants, operators, distributors, hotels and casinos.

"Everyone who has anything to do with the amusement industry should attend this trade show and seminars," said John Frank, Pepsi-Cola Co.

The new seminar policy allows all registrants to take in the top-notch educational program for only \$35 in advance (\$55 after Aug. 30), while intensive programs give executives and developers access to successful colleagues who share their experiences in professional forums.

Fun Expo will unveil dozens of new and exciting products this year, all focusing on the long-term profitability of this year's expected 8,000 attendees.

Among them:

Coin-op, Skill and Redemption Games:

New exhibitors Data East USA, Merit Industries, and Rowe International will join a record 45 other coin-operated game and related merchandise suppliers at the show. At press time, Bob's Space Racers had revealed its plan to show the new Total Eclipse; Coin Concepts latest product Six Gun Saloon skill games brings a non-violent theme to Old West action. SNK Corporation of America will bring Neo

mini capsule crane machines, Neo Geo counter top machines as well as the rest of its popular Neo Geo titles. And Fun Industries will introduce the Party Machine Cash Cube to the show, perfect for parties - and it travels!

Returning vendors Williams Electronics, Betson/Fun Merchants, Skee-Ball and Data East also plan exciting rollout for the benefit of the important amusement buyers at Fun Expo. The AAMA's booth will be the largest ever, featuring the hottest games and "sit down videos" from vendors including Sega, Namco, Jaleco, Konami, Bay-Tek and Fabtek.

Simulators, Virtual Reality and Laser Games:

The hi-tech boom continues at Fun Expo with one of the super-hot sports simulation games competing with full motion simulation, virtual reality and laser attractions.

"Finally there are hi-tech options for every space and every budget," said Beeken.

New exhibitor Thomson Entertainment's "Venturer S2" full motion simulator will be in good company with 20 laser attraction companies, including Laser Storm Q-Zar, Ascension Productions, Ultrazone, LaserTron, and new exhibitor, Laser Chaser. Virtual Reality companies will include new exhibitors Virtuality Inc, Photon/VectoR, Actual Reality International as well as returnees Ferris Productions.

Inflatables / Outdoor Exhibits:

New outdoor exhibits will give those seeking portable attractions, small thrill rides and inflatables more options than ever before. New exhibitors Camelot Leisure and Inflatable 2000 join P&L Inflatables, Leisure Activities Unlimited and FunTec/Toptec, Mr Inflatable, Moon Walk Enterprises, Pizazz Playsystems, Spaceball (Trampoline Ltd and many, many more...

Food & Beverage:

Buyers looking for new taste sensations and a wider variety for their customers will find new exhibitors California Churros and Pizza of Eight along with a lot of more familiar names serving all sorts of drinks, candies, pretzels, pizzas, ice blocks and other quickly and easily made food treats. Walk the floor and sample them for yourself!

Costumes:

This category has grown every year, with more unique options for custom and licensed characters than ever before. New exhibitors Carol Flemming Costume Design Studio, Marylen Costume Design, Characters UnlimiteS and Chatterbox, join 1995 exhibitors Crown



Coin Concept's Six Gun Saloon, just one of the many products you will see at this year's Fun Expo in Las Vegas

Costumes, Stagecraft, The Robot Factory, Mask, Signs & Shapes International, The Costume Factory and Somerville Plastics Corp.

International Vendors:

While many international vendors are represented at the show by their US distributors, Fun Expo has recently seen a rise in the number of non-domestic independent suppliers, reflecting the growing interest in the FEC market outside of the United States. Among those currently confirmed: Active Image International (New Zealand); Thomson Entertainment and Camelot Leisure (UK); Idees Loisirs SA/Ben Arnold Marketing (France); Ascension Productions, WackyPutt, Actual Reality International and Medical Technology (Canada).

Other new products to be premiered at this year's show include new exhibitor S&S Original Amusement's "Frog Hopper" children's ride and the "Turbo Drop" high thrill ride. For the next level in karting, RE Enterprises will introduce the "Outlaw Racer" sprint car and "GPT Racer" go karts. Tacki-Mac Grips will provide grips for baseball and softball bats and miniature golf clubs; and new exhibitor Step 2 Corporation presents the Wagon for Two rental strollers.

Anyone in the family entertainment centre business should make a point of not missing Fun Expo; the products on display, the excellent seminars and networking events all lead to great profit-making ideas. You won't know what you're missing out on unless you attend.

For more information on Fun Expo, you contact the organisers on +1 (914) 993 9200, fax +1 (914) 993 9210 or email FUNEX-PO@aol.com.

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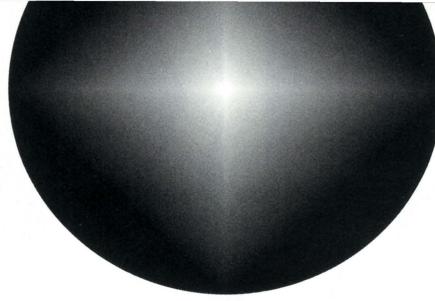
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MagBall



"A wave of sound envelops the arena and the crowd roars in anticipation of the action. All four players explode into action! A Blaster veteran reaches the MagBall first, but just barely. As the activated magnetic attractor glows green, the yellow MagPod grabs the ball and accelerates toward the goal. You and your Viking team-mate race to the yellow goal to defend. You charge the Blaster, slamming your opponent into the wall. A quick pivot and your pod blocks the shot...."

After a number of trade show displays and months of testing, GreyStone Technology are ready to launch MagBall, an exciting new VR sports game. Visitors to last year's IAAPA trade show will probably remember the busy GreyStone stand, with its good looking Andromeda pods running the MagBall software.

The game combines the speed of hockey, the excitement of bumper cars and the skill of basketball in a fun and challenging VR experience. Players are seated in the open Andromeda pods (no headsets necessary) and have two joysticks to control their hovercrafts. There's a wide screen in front to show all the action in the arena and the 3D graphics are good.

Each vehicle has a magnetic attractor which can be activated to attract and hold the ball. The only problem is that the magnetic field only lasts for a limited amount of time so you can't hold onto it for too long. The button can also be pressed to reverse the polarity and repel the ball. This is used to either pass the ball onto your team mate or to shoot it into the goal.

MagBall's strong point is that it really provides good, competitive gameplay - something that many VR platforms have failed to deliver. The action is fast, the graphics are smooth and the game is challenging. Having said that, the concept is also simple enough that even a first time user can jump in the cockpit and get value for their money.

GreyStone Technology have recently completed seven months of on-location tests with MagBall. The company says the test period taught them a lot about operating MagBall as an attraction and many of these lesson have been incorporated into the final version of the game.

"The results are evident in the intrinsic attraction of the experience," says managing director of sales and marketing, Dave Klugh. "The smooth lines of the Andromeda pods, the draw of the 'spectator view' monitors, the entertaining training video and the ultra modern MagBall themed environment create an almost magnetic attraction designed to serve as a centrepiece for a variety of amusement and entertainment venues."

The competitive nature of the game also makes it ideal for league play, ensuring that all-important repeat business needed to make attractions like this really profitable.



The Andromeda System that MagBall runs on is a multi-purpose platform that can be easily reconfigured to accommodate new software titles. It contains a high resolution monitor and full digital stereo sound to really immerse players in the virtual world. The pods have a sleek, modern look which allows them to blend into any hi-tech themed environment, and they provide a high level of immersion without completely closing players in or requiring them to wear a head mounted display.

GreyStone sell the Andromeda pods in sets of 4 (the ideal number for playing MagBall) and they have both a Basic and Themed Environment System. The themed option gives you a number of extras which really makes the MagBall game an attraction in your centre.

The main feature is a spectator viewing system which lets customers watch the game in action. This is excellent for generating interest in the game, and it gets waiting players involved in the excitement. Other extras that come with the themed package include a base, upright arches and operator kiosk; a neon MagBall sign and other themed props; a players' instructional video; and special lighting and stereo sound systems.

GreyStone can also give buyers printed post-game player statistics; customised graphics

on the Andromeda pods; and "virtual advertising" in the form of billboards in the MagBall arena or logos and graphics on the arena floor.

The company has already lined up a number of buyers for its first production run of MagBall. Locations like the EPSN Sports Cafe on the new "Boardwalk" at Disney World in Orlando; the new Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas; and the Virtual Reality Centre on 42nd Street, near Times Square in New York City will all open with 4 pod MagBall systems.

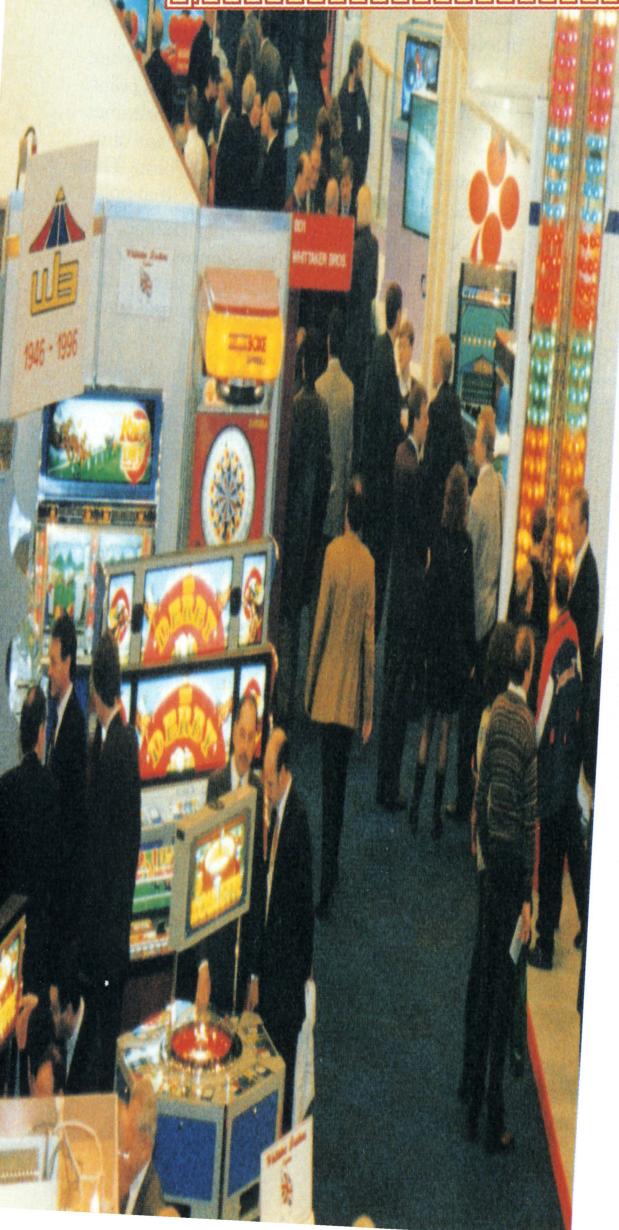
Meanwhile, GreyStone already have a second title, Canyon Runner, under development and it should be ready for release in the near future.

Of the many types of virtual reality equipment shown at last year's IAAPA Show, MagBall seemed to be one of the most promising. Like all hi-tech equipment of this kind, it doesn't come cheap but GreyStone have included all the necessary ingredients to make the game into a real attraction.

With the right atmosphere in a high-traffic location, MagBall could well become one of the few VR success stories.



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STAR ★ TECH TALK

THE TRUTH ABOUT LOCK PICKS

TIP: I URGE ANYONE TO BE CAREFUL BEFORE THEY SPEND THE MONEY.

The claim that two or three picks will unlock 95% of all locks is at best misleading, and more likely simply ludicrous. Just like a baseball bat, ice skates, or a violin, a lock pick is a tool made to do a job. One could market the above items claiming these three bats can hit 95% of the home runs, these skates will win 2/3 of the gold medals, and this violin will play 3/4 of all symphonies, and be about as honest or informative.

Like the other three examples, locksmithing and specifically picking locks is a skill built up with a great deal of practice. Of the many pick styles available, most locksmiths settle on one or two favourite picks for the majority of their work. The catch is that the pick isn't magic, each locksmith simply finds one or two that feel best to him. There is no universal pick design. Whether you chose a rake or hook or whatever style pick, only practice makes picking locks "easy."

Of my dozen or so picks, I use one rake almost exclusively. As to tension wrenches, one needs a couple different sizes to accommodate the variety of keyway sizes. No secrets there either.

We are in a lock-intensive business. Find a cooperative local locksmith, give him your spare key set business, and establish a relationship of trust. You are not up to anything criminal, you are just maintaining your equipment and access to it. You should be able to find a locksmith willing to make or order picks for you. You can make your own out of flat wire stock. Again, the local locksmith will probably sell you a foot or two of stock very cheap.

While our rivals have concentrated on other things, Cash Box has worked tirelessly on expanding our subscriber base and as we now cruise through our third year of publication, we can lay claim to the largest number of Park, FEC, Arcade and Street operators as paid up subscribers, of any international industry magazine in the world.....and it's still growing fast.

Like everyone, we know that a magazine that operators pay for.....is at least a 10 times better selling vehicle than a "junk mail freebee" circulated at random

cash box international
Magazine

Goes into real operators hands

"Disk" tumbler locks, like those supplied with games are the simplest to pick. The Ace type lock is much harder, and the high security locks like the Abloys, Medecos, magnetic types, etc. are very, very difficult. Locks that don't move freely are not easy to pick, so if the lock in question is on a door that's tight, you aren't going to turn it with your pick and tension wrench anyway.

I would hate to see someone shell out \$40 for something they can get for a lot less and find out it doesn't do what they think it will in the bargain. I am not a licensed locksmith, I have taken the course.

I got the training twenty years ago, early in my career, intending to learn what we needed in this industry. I never intended to hand out a locksmith shingle. I have gotten some bonus points over the years letting young ladies into their apartments after they lost their keys, though. You do what you gotta do.

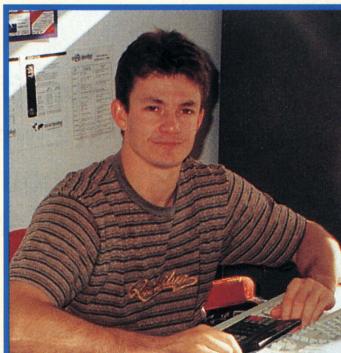
COMPONENT VALUES - READING THE NEW LABELS

THE CODE

We all learned resistor colour codes early on in our electronic careers. If you don't know the codes, run, do not walk, to the nearest colour code chart and get with it. The colour codes are printed in a zillion places. We should know that yellow-purple-orange on a resistor means 47000 ohms or 47K ohms. K means 1000 and M or Meg means million. What do you do when your components don't have colour stripes?

ID

First you must identify what the part is. For full size components this is usually not a problem. Caps look like caps and resistors look like resistors. Well, mostly. In the ever growing



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world of surface mount parts, the distinction is not always so easily made. Use the clues in the schematic, the identifiers silk screened on the PC board, your DMM, your experience, the part's relationship to other parts, and any other evidence to identify the part.

COLOURLESS

Many parts sport numbers instead of colour bands. THE NUMBERS READ JUST LIKE THE COLOURS. An itty-bitty SM (surface mount) resistor might have 473 printed on it. This means 4-7-000 just the same as the opening example. 473 means 47K. This trend is starting to move on to full size parts as well. When you see it on capacitors there are slightly different rules. The value of a cap is printed in pf (picofarads). Thus if you see 473 on a cap it means 47000 pf. You would more likely call it .047uf. Either is correct since they are the same.. Small value caps, especially the small disk ceramic types, may only have two digits. 47 indicates a 47pf cap, but 471 means 470pf not 471pf.

NOTE

There is a caution when reading cap values. Some ceramic disk caps have a temperature/stability rating designation letter printed along with the value. It might be a Z or a U or whatever, but sometimes it is a K. Do not confuse this with the K that means 1000. When you see 473K on a cap, it does not mean 473,000,000pf or 473Kpf. It means .047uf with a K rating. Some small caps have colour bands. Read these like resistors, but read the value in picofarads.

On a related note, some schematics are drawn with a letter in place of the decimal point. Then 47K looks the same, but 4.7K becomes 4K7. Under this convention, R just means ohm. 4R7 would mean 4 point 7 ohms, 4.7ohm. This is done so no one misses the little decimal point.

Newer resistors offer another change. 1% and 2% resistors are now quite common, and we see them all over. These resistors have a four band code. Thus we get yellow-purple-black-red for 4-7-0-0.

That is still 47K, but it could also be something like brown-red-red-red or 1-2-2-00. That is 12.2K which shows us that in 1% resistors, the values are not restricted to the standard values list.

NANO NANO

I don't even want to think about nanofarads. Picofarads? We oldtimers still call them uuf (micro-microfarads) from time to time. The "u" in uuf is actually the Greek letter mu. Mu is the abbreviation for micro. In many places, the term was written mmf, and uf was mf. In these days of huge caps, mf means millifarad, so I guess I can stick to uf or ufd. Due to the mm abbreviation, the more clever ones among us would sometimes use the term Mickey Mouse. Yes, we would actually walk into the parts store and ask for a 100 Mickey Mouse cap. That was 100pf. Having asked for a 100 Mickey mouse cap we might then ask for a .047 mouse cap. We would then chuckle and smile. I ain't making it up. Those good old days are gone forever. Wanna hear about how cold it used to be?

Reprinted courtesy of Star Tech Journal, Inc.

Written by Douglas McCallum, edited by James Calore.

SPANISH AMUSEMENT TRADE SHOW
INTERNACIONAL



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GTI EXPO '96

a success despite Taipei's problems...



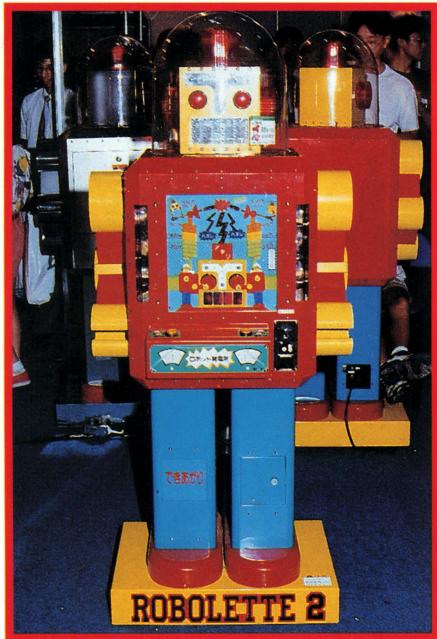
GTI Expo '96, held from June 29 through to July 1 at the Taipei World Trade Centre, managed to be a success despite the numerous difficulties the amusement industry in Taiwan has experienced lately.

The show provided many Taiwanese companies with the opportunity to either enter or expand more fully into the international market, and gave foreign exhibitors and guests the chance to experience the amusement trade in Taiwan on a first hand basis.

To rattle off some statistics, GTI Expo '96 saw approximately 8,000 visitors, 76 exhibitors, and around 3,000 company representatives - 300 of which arrived from one of at least 35 foreign countries.

THE TAIPEI "VIDEO ARCADE SCANDAL"

The fact that GTI was able to attract the number of visitors it did, is a tribute to the show's organisers. This was because of the Taipei "video game scandal" which saw most of the city's arcades closed down at one stage.



Above: "Robolette", the popular prize dispenser from Japanese company, Kitanohon Tsushin Kogyo

It all began back in April when a number of Taipei police officers and prosecutors, including many mid- and high-ranking officials (at least one of whom was a deputy chief of a Taipei police station), were busted for accepting bribes from video game parlour tycoon Chou Jeng-shen, who ran a chain of 40 arcades in the greater Taipei area. The bribes were accepted in return for protecting Chou's operation of illegal gambling machines.

At the end of April, Justice Minister Ma Ying-jeou told lawmakers that the Taipei government was determined to crack down on scams and corruption and most of the 3,000 video game arcades in Taipei were shut down. Despite complaints from operators, Taipei mayor Chen Shui-bian insisted on continuing the crackdown to meet his promise of closing all illegal video game operations within one month. He said he wanted all arcades closed because he believed even the legal ones were operating gambling machines.

On April 23 video game operators in Taipei held a 10,000 person march to protest about the crackdown on video game parlours, legal and illegal ones alike, and to demand that legislators devise laws to regulate the arcades' operations.

By May 15th, the headlines of Taipei's lead English-speaking newspaper publication, the China Post, read that 123 people had been indicted in the arcade scandal, and that 89 police officers were accused of taking NT\$21 million (nearly US\$800,000) in bribes. In early June, Taiwan's top police commander, Yen Shih-hsi, director-general of the National Police Administration, told a meeting of 200 inspec-

tors that, in the face of the worst corruption scandal to hit the police force in decades, he would resign.

It was not until June that 15 pachinko parlours re-opened in Taipei, after having been closed for a month and a half as a result of the crackdown. Mayor Chen warned, however, that the police would keep a close eye on the pachinko parlours, and would crack down on them if there was even the smallest illegal activity. Chen also warned that police station chiefs would be relieved of duty if they failed to quickly root out any illegal gambling occurring in video game their jurisdiction. Indeed, the owners of the 15 re-opened pachinko parlours complained that police officers were checking out their patrons every two hours.

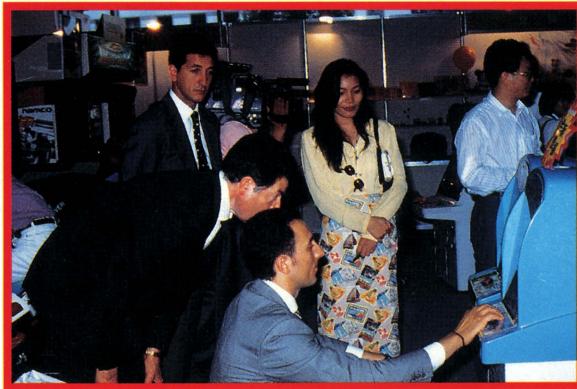
Presently, only fully licensed amusement centres are allowed to remain open in Taiwan, leaving numerous unlicensed centres closed; most of the licensed arcades in Taipei are now re-opened. A government report on the status of the amusement industry in Taiwan, including new regulations, is expected to come out this month. Meanwhile, as you would imagine, amusement sales have decreased dramatically in Taiwan, at least domestically, and this has led to the slow-down or closure of some amusement manufacturers as well.

So with all this as the backdrop to GTI '96, the organisers accomplished a great deal with the show, and it can be assumed the event would have been bigger and better had it not been for the untimely "video arcade scandal".

THE SHOW

Seven legislators and two prominent information engineering professors attended the Expo's opening ceremony. Many more government officials had been invited but, due to the video arcade scandal, they opted not to come. Needless to say, a big deal was made of those legislators who did participate.

A number of foreign visitors to GTI Expo '96 considered the trade show to be small and not particularly well attended.



But Taiwanese visitors like Leo Wang, president of A-Rabbit International, felt that the show should not be compared to the larger, more popular amusement expos held in countries like America, England and Japan.

"Taiwan is still in its infancy, relatively speaking, in terms of the development of its amusement industry," he said. "Considering this, it is doing quite well and the GTI Expo reflects this."

There were some new products on show at the GTI Expo, many of which were actually made by Taiwan companies.

Micro Sova Co is the first Taiwanese company to produce games with 3D graphics and they showed two at GTI Expo. The first was a flying and shooting game called Silver Fox and Micro Sova have designed a special play station specifically for the game. The second machine was Speed, a large gambling unit which uses a high-efficiency 3D Mirage image operating system.

International Games System (or IGS), also had two new games on show: Crusaders of the Orient and Master of Swords & Knives. The first is a fighting game based on the popular Chinese legends of the Tang Dynasty, while Master of Swords & Knives is a kung-fu game. Both have popular Chinese themes, and while the company hopes the games will find a market overseas, they are really targeted for success in the local markets.

Superball, a three-in-one game by Bigigo contains roulette, bingo and "happy ball" and it attracted interest interest, as did Robelette, a popular vending machine by the Japanese company Kitanihon Tsushin Kogyo.

Some of the latest video games made outside of Taiwan were also on display at GTI Expo through distributors, and these included Namco's Prop cycle and Sega's Gunblade, both shown by Shih Mei Co.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

During seminar discussions held at GTI Expo, the industry seemed to accept that they would have to take responsibility for regulating themselves. There was a feeling that the impact of the video arcade scandal had provided a turning point for the Taiwan industry: the illegal arcades had been weeded out and now the legal ones have a better chance of flourishing.

The scandal has also focused government attention on the amusement industry and it is hoped that they will finally devise much needed regulations for the licensing and operating of arcades in Taiwan. The laws need clarifying so operators know just what is legal and what is not.

GTI Expo '96 served the critical purpose of giving the Taiwan government a chance to view the amusement industry as both vital and valid. The industry now hopes the government will give them the attention and recognition they believe they deserve.

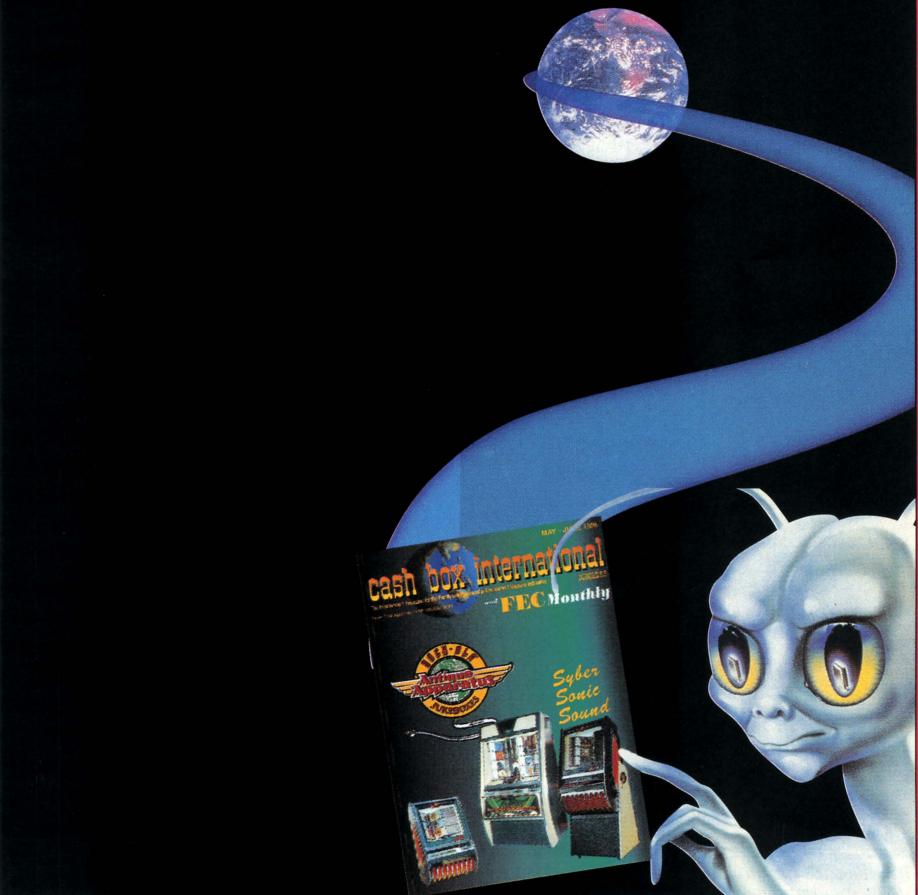
GTI Expo '96 was the first of what will now become an annual event. Even though this year's show was not large compared to other international trade shows, it was good sized and drew the highest number of foreign guests of any amusement expo held in Taiwan so far.

There was certainly room for more buyers at the show, but GTI Expo still managed to open plenty of doors for both the importing and exporting of equipment - despite the language barriers experienced by foreign visitors. GTI



Expo '97 is scheduled for next August, and according to the organisers, many of the exhibitors have already signed up for the event.

No matter where... Cash Box can take you there !



VNEA

The Valley National Eight Ball League Association (VNEA) held its 16th annual international championships from May 25th to June 1st. When they entered Las Vegas' Riviera Hotel and Casino, the 5,000 VNEA pool players who participated in the event were greeted with 185 freshly felted Valley pool tables. A sight to behold.

A record breaking 842 teams and 3,256 singles entrants shot it out for a piece of the \$360,000+ available in cash prizes and the title of "Champion" in 16 different divisions.

The annual championship is an amateur pool players mecca and it attracted the best amateur players from 37 U.S. states and the following 11 countries: Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Germany, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. The players came from 190 of VNEA's ever increasing number of Charter holders which now exceeds 375 members and is still growing.

On the Saturday morning the competition began with the 9-Ball singles action and continued the following morning with the 8-Ball singles divisions. For three exciting days and nights, the unfortunate players that lost were eliminated and then the finals were held on the Tuesday morning.

Here are some of the highlights...

After capturing the 8-Ball Men's Singles title in the Regular Division last year, Stan

Tourangeau of Wal-Mac Amusements in Alberta, Canada, pocketed \$2,500 and the 8-Ball Men's Singles Masters Championship this year. He then went on to win the 9-Ball Men's Masters Singles and another \$2,000.

The 8-Ball Women's Singles (Regular Division) was a truly international affair, with Begona Cortes of Import Pool Play in Spain defeating Anne Green of Amarda Holdings in Australia. In the Masters Division, Gari Jo Bloomberg of Rushmore Amusement retained her title.

Indy Amusement's Janis Byrne and Tony Blankenship were the team to beat in the Scotch Doubles Masters competition, and they came through, defeating Jean Cardinal of Wal Mac Amusements and Wayne Boam of Inter Provincial Amusements, both of Canada.

With the conclusion of the Singles and Scotch Doubles, players in the team events were getting ready for their turn in the spotlight. Tuesday evening marked the beginning of the team competition with the ever colourful Team Opening Ceremonies.

Having outgrown the large Riviera Grand Ballroom, the ceremonies were again moved outdoors to the beautifully decorated Riviera parking lot. The lot was transformed into a pool players' party pavilion with a decorated stage and large dance floor.

The ceremonies got underway with some unique zaniness. As the cry "Look up at the



VNEA proudly introduced the "Charlies" at this year's championships. They are named after Charles P. Milhem, founder of the VNEA

sky" went around, the crowd was mesmerised by the world famous Flying Elvis'. Four in all, they dropped into the centre stage from 6,000 feet with the last Elvis displaying a 20 x 40 foot VNEA Pool League banner. This was followed by the colourful and impressive procession of flags held by player representatives from every state and country in attendance.

The Suds & Chips Mixer served as the ideal stage for the winners of the singles events to be recognised and awarded their prizes. When this was completed, five new members were inducted into the VNEA Amateur Pool Player "Hall of Fame". They were: Allen Duprel, Rushmore Amusement; Mike Jensen, Stansfield Vending; Ron Morton, Indy Amusements; Don Rotert, C&N Sales; and Doug Rowland, D&R Star.

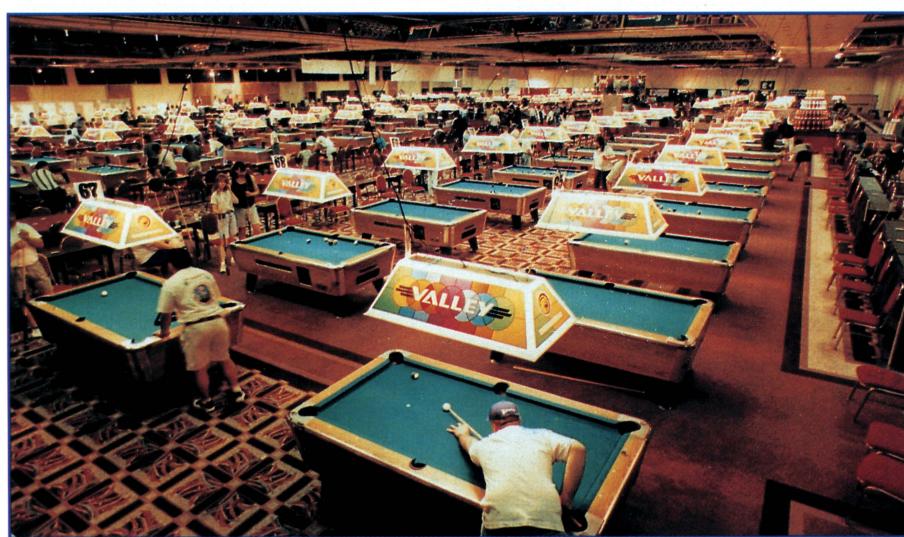
The formalities were brought to a close by an impressive fireworks display, with the climax being the letters V N E A lighting up the Nevada sky. And with the last booms of the pyrotechnics show, the colourful and flamboyant 13-piece, 60's Motown Review "Big Bang Beat" started playing.

The following morning the Team competition began in earnest. Over 648 men's teams and 194 women's teams waged battle, day and night, for the next four days.

In the 8-Ball Open Team (Regular Division) it came down to two teams from the same hometown to decide the winners. Charbel's V and Charbel's I from State Amusement in Virginia battled it out with Charbel's V taking first prize and \$8,000.

Airway Billiards, playing out of ABC Music & Games in Ohio took out the Men's Masters Team event, while 8-Ball Express Shooting Stars from Rushmore Amusement laid claim to the women's event.

With all the team competitions settled and the tables finally quiet, the stage was set for the long awaited 16th Annual Awards Banquet. Over 2,000 people in their finest attire attended this fun-filled evening of awards, tasty buffet, and good entertainment.



The Riviera's Grand Ballroom was transformed into a pool players paradise with over 165 Valley tables elegantly displayed

After the presentation of the "Charlies" (the trophies to each of the division winners), representatives from each country were called to the stage to say a few words and receive a beautiful crystal globe from VNEA executive director Gregg Elliott.

The evening's festivities included several impromptu drawings for specialty cues and cases donated by McDermott Cues, Mali & Co., and Huebler Industries who also donated a \$2,000+ one-of-a-kind VNEA cue. Meanwhile, everyone was kept laughing by the hilarious comedy of John Pinette.

Earlier in the week, at the elegant President's Reception in honour of VNEA president Gary Benson, Lifetime Sanction Cards were presented to several VNEA manufacturers from Valley Recreation Products chairman, Chuck Milhelm. The cards celebrate a lifetime of commitment to the VNEA and were issued to Lorenzo Mazzone (L.E.A.N.I.), Paul Huebler (Huebler Industries), Larry Johns (McDermott Cues), and Fred Mali, Norm Althoff and John O'Connor (Mali Cues).

The Warren Kelley Meritorious Service Award was also awarded to Craig Dumdei of C&N Sales for his commitment to the league, and the President's Choice Award went to Lorenzo Mazzone of L.E.A.N.I. Slate Company.

Besides all the serious competition and formal ceremonies, the VNEA Championships also had a lot of light-hearted events and activities. There were the Team Uniform Awards which made for a colourful, fun-filled contest. Sure Shots Looney Tunes won the women's event, while Curpen Cues won the men's contest.

As in years past, professional pool instructor, Jerry Briesath, was on hand to give instruction and answer questions. Taking his Pool School on the road, Briesath awed the crowd with his knowledge and shot making techniques.

Dr Cue, Mr Tom Rossman, also wowed the



The colourful procession of flags at VNEA's Opening Ceremonies

crowds during the week with his fast-paced, adrenaline pumping show. Dr Cue held his Artistic Shot Making Competition, with winners taking home money and pool accessories. Another special tournament held during VNEA was the exciting sport of Speed Pool.

Ginger Wizard (David Pearson) was on hand to show players how to do it - he's the world 'speed pool' record holder and can clear a table in 35.4 seconds.

The 1st Annual World Speed Pool Championship was held, and the inaugural winner was Australian, Shawn Budd.

As in every year past, Valley Recreation Products graciously donated a Valley "El Tigre" home pool table to be given away at the Opening Ceremonies. This year's lucky winner was David Darnell of Indiana.

All in all, the 16th Annual VNEA was a huge success. It is one of the

largest amateur pool events in the world and shows what can be achieved when players, operators and manufacturers get together to promote the game.

It's a win-win situation for everyone involved, and with the strong commitment and support given to the VNEA from all areas of the industry, there is little doubt that the annual championships will continue to grow from strength to strength in future years.

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The tournament committee (Gregg Elliott, VNEA executive director is on the far left)

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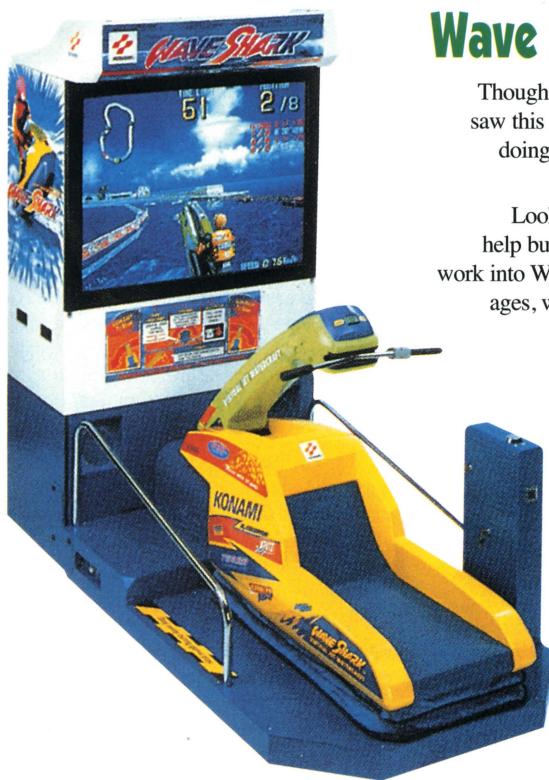
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Wave Shark Konami

Though it was clearly unfinished, some visitors to AOU in Tokyo and ACME in Orlando who saw this game, had a tendency to write it off, but you can bet your bottom dollar they won't be doing that when the game is shown at this month's AM Show in Tokyo and AMOA Expo in Dallas.

Look at Wave Shark anyway you like and you'll see a very good game, one that you can't help but think is going to earn its operators a pretty penny. Konami have put a mountain of work into Wave Shark since those early showings and it's now a game that people of just about all ages, want to play. The graphics are superb, it's much, much quicker, has had some courses

added, including a beginners course, which all have a lot more variety in them with jumps, slides and obstacles, and most importantly, there's a built in 'fun' element that on what we've seen, players find irresistible, particularly in the competitive, linked mode.

The first public showing of the completed Wave Shark was in Brasil at last month's SALEX and it's a long time since this writer has seen a game get the attention that Wave Shark got over the three days of that show. People were constantly lined up and crowding around the four linked games that were on display and both the obvious enjoyment of those playing it and the accompanying body language told a story that had Konami's Louie Rummenigge and Mike Rudowicz extremely happy about its prospects.

Konami are a very good game maker, that have really bounced back after a couple of years where they have suffered large losses, and which they would probably prefer to forget. They're back in profit now and turning out some good games, and that's not only good for them, it's good for the whole industry.

Wave Shark looks a winner to us, Konami will probably have to share much of the market with Namco's Aqua Jet and Sega's coming jet ski game, while ICE's SkiMaxx, although not a jet ski game, is also pretty similar in game play and will attract the same type of player.

SEGA TOO

There's two ways of looking at the news that Sega are currently developing a Jet Ski game, (1) that they have missed the boat and will find it very hard to sell into a market where three such games are already established, or (2) that by being last they will have the advantage of seeing the competition and somehow make their game different enough to attract players and buyers. We think (1) but don't bet on it.



Aqua Jet Namco

As can be seen from the two pictures on this page the physical appearance of the Namco and Konami games is almost identical and there wouldn't appear to be much that Sega can do to make theirs look different when it hits the market, so soon we'll have three.

Gameplay is also quite similar, after all in both games the player is riding a Jet Ski, Namco, with their greater experience in polygon technology probably still have the edge in graphics, but there's only a very small gap now for Konami to make up, so small that it's of no account and with everything else being pretty much the same, Konami's game has got the edge on Namco's particularly through its linking, which gives it the competitive play that players thrive on.

The only problem with this of course is that only the bigger, high volume sites will be able to take advantage of the linking, as the price for two machines or more, to link, will be an obstacle that many operators will think too great. That brings to light the problem with many of these machines that are built to utilise the big screens, the games look fantastic on the big screens, but rarely translate favourably to smaller

screens, and the price and size of the big guys often rule them off many operators buying lists.

We see Aqua Jet doing pretty well in the player market, in single machine sites, but it must lose the bigger, multiple machine sites to Konami, ICE or Sega who's game will also be linkable.

Why a brilliant gamemaker such as Namco who brought linking to the industry with the original Final Lap and who have had so much success with linked games, are reverting to single player games is hard to fathom, but we can only assume they have their reasons, and until those reasons become clear, we'll all just have to live with their present policy.

ESPAÑOL

WINDING HEAT

Winding Heat es la oferta de Konami en juegos de conducción para un mercado de gráficos poligonales que pronto estará atestado de gente y que desde principio parece bastante bueno.

Hemos escuchado informes de lugares donde ha sido probado en la misma manera que como se probó Cruisín USA, mostrando actualmente una pequeña mejora en los ingresos. Si ésto es así, y nosotros respetamos la fuente de información, estamos frente a un juego muy, muy bueno ya que no conocemos ningún fabricante o operador que no aplauda los resultados de Cruisín.

Winding Heat es bastante parecido a Midnight Run en su temática general pero es un juego mucho más completo. Aparte de que ocurre durante la luz del día, los gráficos son mucho mejores, y lo más importante aún, es que los diseñadores del juego han prestado atención y mejorado varios puntos pequeños que han sacado de Midnight Run. También han puesto más, y más circuitos, otorgándole a los jugadores una mayor opción de elección de detalles en los coches y también le han incorporado otras características.

El juego también parece ser un poco más rápido, lo que quizás sea resultado de nuestra imaginación ya que Midnight Run es muy rápido, y también parecería que le otorga al jugador un mayor control de su vehículo.

El mercado se saturará de juegos de conducción en un tiempo muy corto, pero creemos que Winding Heat obtendrá una buena parte de los dólares de los jugadores.

TOKIO WARS

NAMCO

Este juego de combate cabeza a cabeza fue mostrado por primera vez en ATEI al principio de este año en un formato prototipo y es sorprendente que, frente a la excelente receptibilidad que obtuvo, el hecho que haya tomado tanto tiempo para golpear las calles. Namco normalmente se mueve más rápido de que en éste caso.

Sin embargo, ahora está aquí, y claramente se puede observar que se ha trabajado sobre el mismo bastante desde su primera aparición, los gráficos obviamente ahora están terminados y el juego está claramente definido, incorporándole elementos a su atractivo inicial, lo que en el momento de exhibir el prototipo no era muy claro y que hacía que algunos jugadores se moviesen en círculos sin comprenderlo totalmente.

Tokyo Wars posee todas las características de un juego muy exitoso, transportando los grandes tanques a través de las calles de Tokio, persiguiendo mientras Ud. es perseguido, sintiendo el culatazo del cañón mientras que uno dispara, y finalmente "sorprendiendo" a un enemigo, lo que trae un tipo de excitación a las jugadas de este juego que raramente han sido vistas y lo que sin duda hará que los jugadores busquen más acción repitiendo el juego.

Todos los tanques tienen el mismo poder de fuego y sus otras capacidades son también iguales, y posee un tipo de curso para los principiantes, permitiéndole a los jugadores sentir los tanques antes de moverse en la zona "del centro" donde realmente ocurre la acción.

Los jugadores pueden elegir una de las distintas formas de jugar este juego, de a dos, uno contra el otro, dos, o tres, pueden jugar contra la computadora, etc., ofreciéndoles una cantidad enorme de oportunidades para los distintos niveles de juego.

Lo que encontramos difícil de incorporar es la

KONAMI

configuración de la presentación inicial del juego, para su comercialización. Una configuración grande, realmente cara, con cuatro jugadores sentados, lo que realmente limitará en gran medida su adquisición.

Namco dice que cuando lo probaron, éste demostró ser, por lejos, la mejor configuración de un juego y, ellos deberían saber, pero nosotros esperamos que no sea verdad que, el mismo sujeto que surgió con una configuración para un solo jugador para Dirty Dash, está detrás de este juego.

Observé Tokyo Wars en uno de los próximos shows, y quizás tenga que vender su casa o algo para poder comprarlo, pero realmente vale la pena adquirirlo si uno posee un salón lo suficientemente grande.

WAVE SHARK

KONAMI

A pesar de que sin duda no estaba terminado, algunos visitantes de AOU en Tokio y en ACME en Orlando, quienes vieron este juego, siguieron la tendencia de borrarlo de sus listas, pero sin duda alguna Ud. puede apostar que no harán lo mismo cuando el juego sea exhibido en los próximos meses en el AM Show en Tokio y en la AMOA Expo en Dallas.

Observe, sin dudar al Wave Shark y verá que se trata de un muy buen juego, de uno de los que no se puede dejar de pensar que les permitirá ganar a sus operadores buen dinero.

Konami ha incorporado mucho trabajo en Wave Shark desde que lo expuso en sus inicios y ahora es un juego que la gente de todas las edades, querrán jugar.

Los gráficos son geniales, es mucho, mucho más rápido, tiene algunas pistas adicionadas, incluso una pista para los principiantes, y todas han incorporado una mayor variedad en ellas, algunos saltos, deslices y obstáculos y; lo más importante, posee un elemento de "diversión" incorporado que hemos podido observar, que por lo que hemos podido apreciar hasta ahora los jugadores encuentran que es irresistible, particularmente en el formato de competencia.

La primera exhibición pública del juego completo de Wave Shark fue en Brasil en la Expo SALEX del mes pasado y hace mucho que éste escritor no ha visto un juego que atraiga tanto la atención como lo hizo éste, durante los tres días que duró el Show. La gente, continuamente hacia cola formando una multitud alrededor de los 4 juegos entrelazados que estaban en exhibición y, tanto la obvia alegría de aquellos que estaban jugando con él como el lenguaje corporal que los acompañaba mostraron una historia que tenían a Louie Rummenigge y Mike Rudowics de Konami extremadamente felices sobre su futuro.

Konami es un fabricante muy bueno, que realmente ha recuperado vigor después de un par de años donde sufrieron grandes pérdidas, y que probablemente ellos quisieran olvidar. Están otra vez produciendo ganancias y fabricando algunos juegos muy buenos, y ésto, no sólo es bueno para ellos, es bueno para toda la industria.

Wave Shark tiene todo para ser un ganador, a pesar de que desafortunadamente, Konami probablemente tenga que compartir el mercado con Aqua Jet de Namco y el próximo a aparecer Jet Ski de Sega, mientras que Ski Maxx de Ice, a pesar de no ser un juego de Jet Ski, es bastante parecido en su juego y atraerá el mismo tipo de jugador.

AQUA JET

NAMCO

Como se puede observar en las dos fotos de ésta página la apariencia física de los juegos de Namco y Konami es casi idéntica y parecería que no hay mucho que Namco pueda hacer para que su juego tenga un aspecto diferente cuando sea presentado al mercado, así que pronto tendremos tres de lo mismo.

El formato de juego es también bastante similar, después de todo en ambos juegos el jugador está conduciendo un Jet Ski. Namco, con su mayor experiencia en tecnología poligónica probablemente todavía tenga una ventaja en la gráfica del juego, pero hay en la actualidad es solamente una pequeña brecha que Konami deberá solucionar, tan pequeña que realmente no cuenta y con todo lo demás siendo prácticamente lo mismo, deberíamos esperar que el juego de Konami, tenga una pequeña ventaja sobre Namco a través de la interconexión de los juegos que ésta sí posee, lo que le permite al jugador que le gusta competir buscar ésta ventaja.

El único problema con ésto, por supuesto es que, sólo los salones con grandes volúmenes podrán tomar ventaja de esta conexión de máquinas, ya que el precio de dos o más máquinas para unir, será un obstáculo que muchos operadores pensaran que es demasiado grande.

Esto trae a colación el problema de muchas de éstas máquinas que están construidas para utilizar grandes pantallas. El juego tiene un atractivo fantástico en las pantallas grandes, pero raramente se traslada favorablemente a pantallas más pequeñas, y el precio y el tamaño de éstas, muchas veces hacen que muchos operadores se borren de las listas de compras de las mismas.

Creemos que Aqua Jet obtendrá buenos resultados en el mercado de los jugadores, particularmente en los lugares que hay sólo una máquina, pero sin duda perderá en los lugares de máquinas múltiples, donde Konami, Ico o Sega poseen máquinas cuyos juegos también deberán estar interconectadas.

Porqué un fabricante brillante como Namco, que presentó la interconexión de máquinas a la industria con su Final Lap original y que ha tenido tantos grandes éxitos con juegos interconectados, está regresando a juegos para un solo jugador es algo difícil de comprender, pero solo podemos asumir que ellos tienen sus propios motivos y que, hasta que éstos motivos nos resulten claros a todos nosotros, deberemos convivir con su política actual.

SUPER GT 24 HOURS

JALECO

Jaleco ha tenido éste juego en desarrollo y bajo pruebas por bastante tiempo con la idea de que la entrada del mismo al campo de los juegos poligonales sea una entrada exitosa. Y, generalmente el trabajo duro reditúa como ha ocurrido con éste juego que en sus pruebas en varios lugares de Japón ha demostrado ser de un nivel muy alto y resultar en cifras muy interesantes con respecto a sus ganancias

Basándose en una carrera de 24 horas al estilo de Le Mans, Super GT 24 Hours le da a los jugadores no sólo una carrera rápida y excitante, pero también todo el drama de una carrera real de resistencia, con paradas trampas y tácticas de carga de combustible, etc., y toma forma en el mercado actual como un juego que podría atraer muchos seguidores.

El juego aparece excelentemente en la pantalla, los coches se manejan bien, una cualidad que a Jaleco le ha rendido buenos resultados en juegos previos, es muy competitivo y los coches vuelan a una velocidad increíblemente rápida sobre la pista.

Los coches de los jugadores tienen configuraciones diferentes ofreciéndoles la posibilidad de elección; por ejemplo un coche con velocidad máxima alta, pero relativamente baja aceleración y manejo entre promedio y bueno; y, otro coche con aceleración rápida, buen manejo y una velocidad máxima menor tope de conducción. Existen muchas variaciones incluyendo un determinado armado para "principiantes", y es obvio que mucho trabajo y análisis ha estado incorporado a este juego.

Super GT 24 horas es en realidad un juego que no puede fallar, no hemos podido jugar con éste juego en un lugar que estuviera al lado de otros juegos de conducción, y tampoco hemos podido observar la reacción de los jugadores frente a juegos diferentes de conducción, de forma tal que nos resulta difícil comparar a Super GT, por ejemplo con Speed Up o Winding Heat, pero el sentimiento de nuestras entrañas nos dice que este juego tiene lo mejor de todos ellos.

No podemos pensar en ninguna razón por la cual Super GT no será un exitoso juego para Jaleco, realmente han trabajado mucho en él, lo han examinado mucho para darle los mejores retoques y creemos que se venderá a un mucho mejor precio que los juegos de conducción con los cuales va a competir.

Super GT sera exhibido en todos los próximos Shows y le sugerimos a los operadores del mercado que están interesados en juegos de conducción, que se muevan al Show más cercano donde podrán juzgar, bajo un mismo techo, a todos los nuevos juegos.

DEAD OR ALIVE

TECMO

Este excelente juego de lucha poligonal está ahora en el mercado y está obteniendo un gran poder de seducción, al punto que muchos que originalmente no le dieron importancia porque pensaron que era muy similar a Virtua Fighter ahora lo están examinando más detenidamente. La idea de su similitud ha desaparecido ahora que se vió que Tecmo trabajó mucho con este juego y que él mismo posee una personalidad propia, que indudablemente está trayendo a los jugadores.

A pesar de que es el primer juego poligonal de Tecmo, lo han podido armar bastante rápido y, Dead or Alive tiene una gran presentación, la acción es rápida y los jugadores tienen un control excelente sobre los luchadores, quienes presentan más acción y movimientos que una bolsa llena de gatos salvajes. Las combinaciones son óptimas, los movimientos "mortales" son grandiosos y en conjunto éste es un buen paquete que, con un poco de suerte tendrá una vida larga y productiva. Asegúrese de examinar este juego en la primera oportunidad que se le presente, es un buen juego.

AMERICAN RODEO BULL

FALGAS

Industrias Falgas de España fabrica este "American Rodeo Bull" (Toro de Rodeo Estadounidense) y ésta bestia que gira, se retuerce y se inclina es una máquina que puede hacer que todos los días sean un gran día para los operadores que poseen un buen lugar para ubicarlo.

Observé a un operador, recientemente en Brasil y la atención que este juego atraía era poderosa, pero lo que más nos llamó a nosotros la atención era que no importando cuantos "riders" (jinete) fueran lanzados sobre el colchón inflable que lo rodeaba, siempre habían más jinetes esperando poder saltar y ser lanzados del toro, tanto mujeres como hombres.

El Rodeo Bull necesita de un asistente ya que el

movimiento del ride es totalmente ajustable buscando distintos niveles de dificultad mientras está en movimiento, lo que permite que el asistente se asegure que todos los jugadores reciban algo a cambio de su dinero, no importando cuan poco hábiles como jinetes estos jugadores resulten. El costo de mantener un asistente se cubre rápidamente con las ganancias y no debería preocupar a los compradores de estos juegos el hecho de que sea necesario mantener siempre un asistente junto al mismo y tampoco su costo ya que se recupera la inversión en tan sólo un par de meses.

Rodeo Bull es una máquina relativamente grande y obviamente necesita espacio, pero si Ud. posee el espacio necesario y siente que su establecimiento tiene un buen flujo de clientela, observe ésta máquina, es una máquina que atrae dinero.

DR.X.I.TINGS GUMBOTRON FABTEK INC.

Acá existe un nuevo concepto en máquinas expendedoras de Gumball (Bolitas de Goma) que está sobre pasando a otras máquinas de Gumbal en 6 o 7 veces y que, ya ha demostrado se paga a sí misma en tan poco como tres meses de operación.

Los pequeñitos están fascinados con la caída de la pelotita, que comienza en la parte superior y que recorre todas las cosas en el "campo de juego" mientras es acompañada por un espectacular show de luces y sonidos, cayendo finalmente en la bandeja donde es tomada por el comprador.

Ver a los pequeñitos llenar, ésta máquina de doctores locos, de monedas nos da la sensación de que ellos ponen el dinero para ver el Show y que la pelotita es un premio extra para ellos. Los pequeñitos los aman, y no tan sólo los más chiquitos, los chicos más grandes también hacen trabajar a éstas máquinas.

Una máquina bien construida, atractiva, que puede ser ubicada en cualquier lugar que hayan chicos y que sólo necesita que se la llene de mercadería, se la enchufe y se deje que Dr.X.I.Ting cambie una máquina llena de bolitas y con una caja recolectora de fichas vacías en una máquina con un riel de pelotitas vacías pero llena de fichas, en menos de la mitad del tiempo que lo hacen otras máquinas expendedoras.

Las Gumbotron son distribuidas por Fabtek de Estados Unidos y ellos creen ya poder venderla y distribuirla a cualquier parte del mundo.

SILVER SCREEN POPCORN

ROWE

Si a Ud. le gusta el Popcorn y le gusta hacer dinero, ésta expendedora caliente de Popcorn de Rowe bien vale la pena ser inspeccionada. Y, en realidad no importa si Ud. odia el Popcorn, mientras que le guste hacer dinero, deberá encantarle ésta máquina.

La expendedora Silver Screen Hot Popcorn es una máquina de muy buena calidad de construcción con muchos años de servicio, despacha Popcorn caliente en forma rápida, eficientemente y muy económicamente, dándole al cliente la opción de seis gustos diferentes. Habiéndonos servido un par de veces en los Shows del gremio de los ricos dulces que ésta máquina despacha, pudimos comprobar el producto despachado. Es excelente y por todo lo que hemos podido apreciar, las cifras involucradas en la operación de la SS Popcorn, se suman a las saludables ganancias de operadores con un buen lugar disponible.

Possiblemente sea la expendedora más atractiva de Popcorn que hemos visto, y no hay duda que los clientes se verán atraídos por la máquina para que prueben el maíz, y una vez que lo hacen, quedan

enganchados con la misma. SS Popcorn tiene una capacidad de memoria de aproximadamente 300 o 400 despachos y sólo lleva un poco más de un minuto desde que la ficha es insertada en la máquina y se elige el gusto del Popcorn hasta que la cocción está terminada.

DIE HARD

SEGA

Con la licencia y la temática de la película Die Hard, Die Hard el juego, es probablemente el mejor juego producido hasta la fecha por Sega en su sistema Titan, pero por lo que hemos podido recolectar, los operadores no pueden sólo comprar el juego, lo que era lo que suponían del sistema Titan, sino que tienen que comprar la cabina y un montón de material basura que nos han dicho que incluye entre otros, por ejemplo, Funky Head Boxes, que todos saben no vale ni siquiera un céntimo.

Desconocemos los detalles exactos de ésta situación, pero sí, sabemos que no es buena para los operadores que están buscando juegos de un precio bastante razonable.

Además de todo ésto, hay un rumor de que Sega abandonará el sistema Titan, que entendemos ha sido un desastre para ellos, y sí este es el caso, el comprar éste juego es un acto estúpido, aunque coincidimos con la evaluación general de que se trata de un juego bastante bueno.

Le sugerimos esperar un poco para ver que ocurre, que hará Sega con Titan, y además poder tener una idea de cuan buen dinero la máquina puede ganar, antes de considerar la compra de éste juego por el precio de una máquina entera.

Sin embargo, si Ud. está en un país donde el juego se vende como un kit, y a un precio bastante razonable, es sin duda un juego diferente de pelota y probablemente valga la pena adquirirlo.

SNIPPETS

Luchando en el mercado de los juegos hogareños contra PlayStation de Sony y ahora el gran Nintendo 64, Sega está preparando el lanzamiento de "Daytona Plus" (Daytona 2 ?) al mercado de juegos hogareños en su sistema Saturn, un juego que posee tres pistas más y la habilidad de que los jugadores puedan crear sus propias pistas, además de un juego de pantalla dividida que permite una carrera de competencia similar a la de Twin Cockpits (Dos pilotos) de los Salones. El juego es mucho más rápido y los gráficos, hemos escuchado que son excelentes.

Junte ésto con las noticias de que Virtua Fighter 3 está programado para ser lanzado al mercado de juegos hogareños en el último cuarto de éste año, casi al mismo tiempo que el juego Model 3 en el formato de juegos operados con fichas, y no es difícil que poca consideración que tiene Sega por sus clientes en el mercado de máquinas operadas con fichas.

SkiMaxx, el simulador de ski acuático de ICE ha completado su programa de prueba y sólo necesita terminar la interconexión antes de que sea lanzado al mercado.

No le podemos contar demasiado, pero fue probado en un Salón en donde también se estaba probando uno de los juegos de Jet Ski y que también poseía un Alpine Racer, yadivine qué?

Sega informó que retiró los juegos de Virtua Fighter 3 de los salones japoneses devolviéndolos a la fábrica debido a <defectos malos> en el sistema, pero que posiblemente esté pronto para ser lanzado en el AM Show 'ste mes. Antes de que fuese retirado, los jugadores parecían bastantes contentos con el mismo.

Tales of the Arabian Nights

Williams



Sega have reportedly pulled Virtua Fighter 3 games testing in Japanese arcades back to the factory owing to 'bad bugs' in the system, but it will probably still be ready for release at the AM Show this month. Prior to the pull back, players seemed pretty keen on it.

It's hard to put a handle on Williams latest Pinball, "Tales of the Arabian Nights", actually it's a bit hard to understand why Williams made it as it seems to be a step backwards after Attack From Mars and we can't see much future in stepping backwards in a market that is completely RS.

Arabian Nights has some good features, the customary mile and a half of shutes and ramps, distracting game in the Dot Matrix and all the things a heap other Pinballs have gotPinballs that players are not playing.

Why a company such as Williams would go back to that 'loser' formula when they must have noted the reaction to Attack From Mars, which is refreshing in it's simplicity and the fun it provides, is anyone's guess, but in our opinion it's the wrong move for this market.

Williams are a company that don't take kindly to criticism of any kind and with our luck, Arabian Nights will probably be a good one, but we genuinely believe that manufacturers like Williams and their game designers need to spend a bit of time talking to players, not distributors or operators who they see as their customers, they need to get out there and talk to the people that actually pay for these things, then, and only then, we might see the sick revenue of today, turn into real money.

Unless the Genie in this game can really work some magic, we'll pass.

Die Hard

Sega

Licensed and themed on the Die Hard movies, Die Hard the game, is probably the best game yet produced by Sega for their Titan system, but from what we can gather, operators can't just buy the game which was what the Titan system was supposed to be all about, they have to buy the cabinet and a load of other crap that we've been told includes Funky Head Boxer which everyone knows is not worth a crummet.

We don't know the full ins and outs of the situation, but do know it's not good for operators looking for good reasonably priced games.

On top of all this there's a rumour that Sega are going to abandon the Titan caper which we understand has been a disaster for them, and if that's the case, it makes buying this one an act of stupidity, even though we go along with the general consensus that it's a pretty fair game.

We'd suggest you wait for a while to see first, what Sega are doing with Titan, and secondly to see just how good the game can earn, before you even consider buying this at the price being asked for a full machine.

If however, you find yourself in a country where the game is sold as a kit, and at a reasonable price, that's a different ball game, and it's probably worth having.



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What's New



Winding Heat is Konami's offering to the soon to be crowded, polygon graphic, driving game market and from everything we see, it's a very good one.

We've heard reports where it's tested in a similar manner to how Cruis'n USA tested with actually an increase in revenue. If this is the case, and we do respect the source, we're looking at a very, very good game as we don't know a manufacturer or operator that doesn't applaud the performance of Cruis'n.

Winding Heat is a 'big brother' to Konami's previous good driving game Midnight Run, that puts drivers in their choice of very fast road cars on winding rural highways.....you're not driving round in circles with this one.

Independence Day Sega

We stumbled on this new Sega Pinball, that's themed on the blockbuster movie of the same name on a test site in Chicago recently and couldn't help but be impressed, even though we think it's too much like all the other Pinballs of late that are failing miserably in their efforts to attract players.

If we're wrong and players still want this busy type of game, Independence Day has some great features and what felt to be better gameplay than many previous Sega games, but it's a crying shame that it's going into such a rotten market, as it probably deserves much better than the small production run that will doubtless be its fate.

More next month on this one next month after we see how players respond

Winding Heat Konami

The graphics on Winding Heat are superb, but the game designers are not just relying on graphics, they've put a mountain of work into making the game a real players game that gives speed, excitement and a heap of fun. There are more, and more varied courses, ranging from 'beginners' to 'pro' so that players of all standards can find a level of enjoyment, there's more cars to choose from, and more selectable options in those cars, and the forced-feedback steering gives the cars a great driving 'feel'. There's also a choice of mode, 'Normal Race Mode' or 'Time Attack Mode' which really adds to the game, and particularly if they're linked (links four screens).

It may have been our imagination, as Midnight Run was very quick, but this one seems even quicker, it has a fantastic sense of speed, but as long as you're not completely 'unco' you have good control on the road.

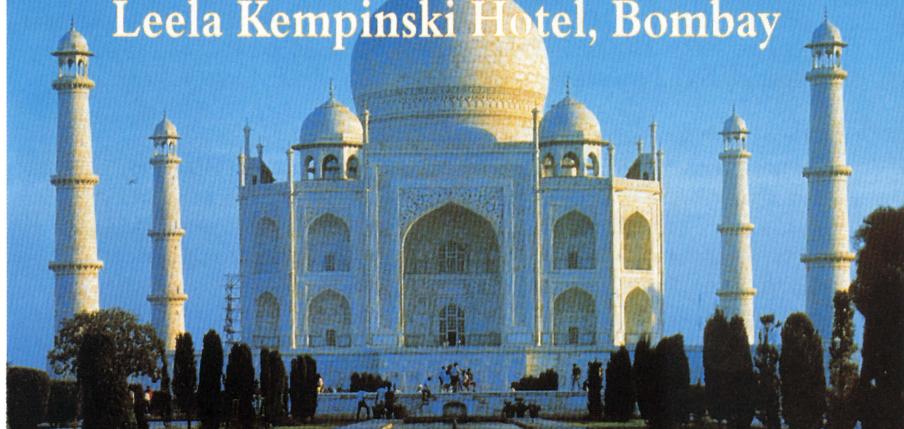
The market is going to be overflowing with driving games in a very short while, but we think Winding Heat will get its good share of the players dollars. In fact we think this is a very good game and one that's going to make some real money.

Buying out of the USA, operators will initially have the choice of the big screen model pictured or a smaller, more affordable, 25" cockpit model, suitable for street operations, and we assume a twin will follow.

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What's New



Silver Screen Popcorn

Rowe

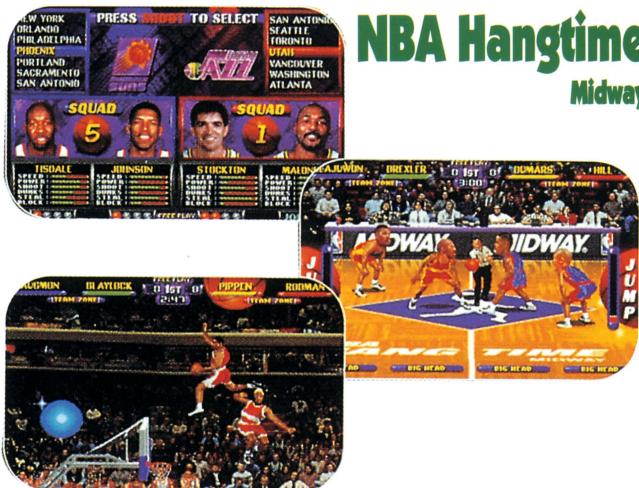
If you like Popcorn and like making money, this Hot Popcorn vender from Rowe is well worth having a look at, in fact it doesn't matter if you hate Popcorn, as long as you like making money, you should like this machine.

The Silver Screen Hot

Popcorn vender is a quality built machine with many years of service in it, it vends beautiful hot Popcorn quickly, efficiently and very cheaply, giving the customer the choice of about six flavours along the way. Having lunched on

goodies that this machine dispenses a couple of times at Trade Shows, we can vouch for the vended product, it's excellent, and from everything we've seen, the figures involved in the operation of SS Popcorn, add up to healthy profits for operators with suitable sites.

Probably the most attractive Popcorn vender that we've seen, there's little doubt that customers will be attracted to the machine to try the corn, and once they do that, you've got them hooked. SS Popcorn has about a 300 or 400 vend capacity from memory, and only takes a bit over a minute from the time the money is inserted and the flavour selection is made, to completion of the cook.



We've done a bit on this one before, but it's now out in the market in numbers and from what we can see it's doing pretty good. The "Create a Player" mode seems to be very popular with players even though it costs, and just about everyone tries to create the same sort of player, one that can leap his height from a flatfooted start, run like Carl Lewis, and handle a ball like a juggler. In short they all want Michael Jordan clones, but they seem to have a lot of fun doing it.

The "Trivia Contest" doesn't look to be a great success, but we've seen a few players get into it. The game itself is very good, taking up from where NBA Jam left off. It hasn't had the impact of that game, which is natural enough, and it's getting a bit of competition from the other Basketball games in the market, but it looks set for a reasonably long and fruitful life.

Come November 1st this year, Midway are releasing an update for the game, titled the Ultimate NBA Hangtime which will introduce new season draft picks and other features under an all new marquee. From what we hear, this update will not be all that expensive and it should give the game an added boost for the new Basketball season.



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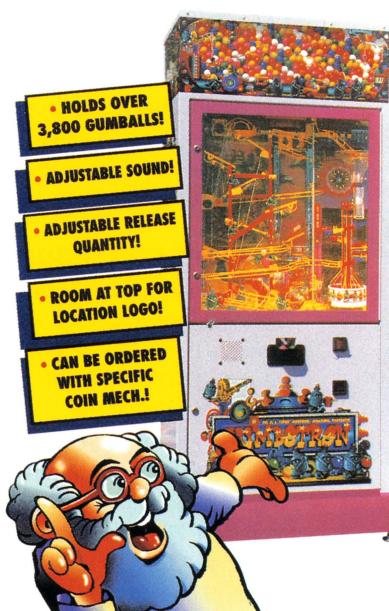
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Kids are fascinated by the drop of the Gumball which starts at the top and follows a course down through all the thingamabobs in the "playfield" while accompanied by a spectacular light and sound show, to ultimately drop into the vend tray for the buyer.

Watching kids feed coins into the crazy Doctors machine, you can't help but get the impression that they would put the money in just to watch the show, so the Gumball vend is like a bonus to them. Kids love it, and not just the little guys, bigger kids are giving these machines a workout also.

An attractive, well built machine, the Gumbotron can be sited just about anywhere there's kids, just fill it up, plug it in and let Dr X.I.Ting turn a full load of Gumballs and an empty cash box, into an empty Gumball hopper and a full cash box in double quick time.

The Gumbotron is distributed by Fabtek of the USA who we believe are ready and able to ship anywhere in the world.



What's New

Rodeo Bull Falgas



Industrias Falgas of Spain make this "American Rodeo Bull" and this bucking, twisting, turning mechanical beast is a machine that can make every day a great day for operators that have a suitable location to place one.

Saw one operating recently in Brasil and the attention it got was something else, but the part about it that really got us in was that no matter how many 'riders' it tossed into the big inflatable surround, there was always more who wanted to jump on and get tossed off, both male and female.

The Rodeo Bull needs an attendant as the movement of the ride is fully adjustable for difficulty *while it's in motion*, which allows the attendant to ensure everyone gets some sort of ride for their money, no matter how inept they are. The cost of the attendant is easily covered by earnings though and should not deter buyers and neither should the price as these blokes can get back their purchase price in as little as a couple of months.

Rodeo Bull is a pretty big piece and obviously needs space, but if you've got the space and feel you have the necessary traffic through your establishment, check these guys out, they're a money machine.

Dynamite Baseball Sega



This new Baseball game from Sega is one that should do well in places where Baseball is

popular, it's well thought out and follows the actual game right down the line, so it will certainly earn in Japan, and should find some takers in the USA.

Graphics (3D-CG) are excellent and players control over the on-screen characters is also very good. Dynamite Baseball definitely has a future but as stated earlier is limited to Baseball loving countries.

Speed Up Gaelco

We've pretty well covered this very good game from Spanish gamemaker, Gaelco in previous issues, but can inform you now that Speed Up (pictured at right) is in full production, is in operation in several major locations in Europe where it's doing some quite incredible business and will be shipping all over the world by the time you read this.

Operators attending the AM Show in Tokyo or the AMOA Expo in Dallas this month will have an opportunity to put Speed Up through its paces, and we recommend you do just that, this is an exciting game that is at least of an equal standard to its Japanese counterparts, and a game that we expect to do quite well for operators in all markets



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What's New

Tokyo Wars

Namco

This head to head combat game was first shown at ATEI early this year in prototype form and it's surprising, going on the reception it got, that it's taken this long to hit the streets, Namco normally move faster than that.

However it's here now, and it can be seen quite clearly that a fair bit of work has gone into it since our first visit, graphics are obviously complete and clearly define the game, adding to its appeal over the prototype which was quite unclear at times and had some players going round in circles.

Tokyo Wars has all the makings of a hit game, wheeling the big tanks through the streets of Tokyo, hunting while you're being hunted, feeling the recoil of the canon when you fire, and finally 'scorching' an enemy, brings a type of excitement to gameplay that is seldom seen, and is sure to have players looking for more.

All tanks are equal in firepower and other capabilities, and there's a sort of beginners course to allow players to get the feel of the tanks before they move into the 'Downtown' area where the real action is.

Players can choose one of many different ways to play the game, in pairs, one against one, two, or three, they can play against the computer, and so on, giving plenty of opportunity for all standards of player.

What we find difficult to take in is the configuration the game is initially being marketed in, a big, and really expensive, 4 player sit down configuration that's price and size will limit its exposure enormously. Namco say that on their testing, this is by far the best configuration, and they should know, but we just hope it was-



n't the same bloke who came up with the single player configuration for Dirt Dash that is behind this one.

Check Tokyo Wars out at one of the upcoming shows, you might have to sell the house or something to buy it, but it's well worth a look if you have a big location.

SNIPPETS

Struggling in the home game market against the Sony PlayStation and now the big Nintendo 64, Sega are preparing to release "Daytona Plus" (Daytona 2 ?) into the consumer market on their Saturn system, a game that has three more tracks and the ability for players to create their own tracks, plus a split screen that allows for competitive racing similar to the twin cockpits in arcades. The game is also much quicker and the graphics are said to be superb.

Couple this with the news that Virtua Fighter 3 is scheduled for release into the home game market in the fourth quarter of this year, much the same time as the Model 3 game will be released in coin-op mode, and it's not hard to see how little Sega consider their customers in coin-op

SkiMaxx, ICE's water skiing simulator has completed its test programme and is just in need of the linking to be completed before it comes into the market. We can't tell you too much, but it tested in one location between one of the Jet Ski games that was also on test and an established Alpine Racer, and.....guess what?

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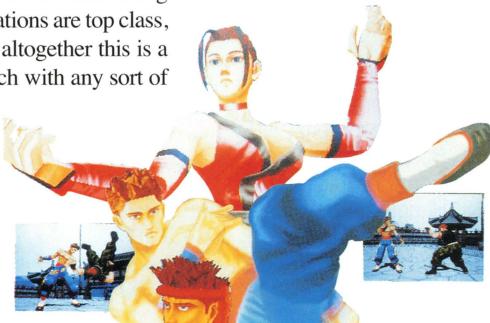
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Dead or Alive

Tecmo

This good polygon fighting game is now in the market and the business it's attracting has got quite a few heads turning as originally many thought it was too much like Virtua Fighter to have much impact. That thought has now been thrown out the window as it's seen that Tecmo have put a lot of thought and work into this game and have also been able to give it a distinct personality of its own, that is obviously appealing to the players.

Even though it's Tecmo's first polygon game, they have got it all together very quickly with Dead or Alive, the game looks great, is fast moving, and players have excellent control over the fighters, who have more moves than a bag full of wildcats. Combinations are top class, 'kill' moves are great and altogether this is a pretty classy package which with any sort of luck at all will have a long and productive life. Make sure you check this one out at the first opportunity you get, it's a good game.



Super GT 24 Hours

Jaleco

Jaleco have had this game in development and under test for some time now, determined to make their entry into the field of polygon games a successful one, and hard work normally pays off as this bloke has been tuned up to a very high level and has subsequently turned in some excellent revenue figures on test sites in Japan.

Based on a 24 Hour endurance race of Le Mans style, Super GT 24 Hours gives players not only a fast and exciting race, but all the drama of a real endurance race with pit stops and fuel tactics, etc and shapes up in the current market as a game that could attract a large following.

The game comes up excellently on screen, the cars handle well, a Jaleco trait that has served them well in previous games, it is very competitive, and the cars fly around the track at incredibly high speed.

The players cars are differently configured offering the choice for example of, a car with high maximum speed, but relatively low acceleration and medium to good handling, and another car with quick acceleration, good handling and a slightly lower maximum top speed. There are many variations including a car set up for "beginners" and it's obvious that a lot of thought has gone into this game.

Super GT 24 Hours is in fact hard to fault, we haven't been in a position to play it in the immediate vicinity of any of the other new driving games, or to watch player reaction to the different games so it's difficult to compare Super GT with say, Speed Up or Winding Heat, but the gut feeling is that it's right up there with the best of them.

We can't see any reason why Super GT won't be a successful game for Jaleco, they've certainly put the work into it, it's been thoroughly tested and fine tuned and we believe it's going to sell at a marginally better price than the driving games it will



be competing with for sales.

Super GT is going to be shown at all the upcoming Trade Shows and we'd suggest that operators in the market for driving games, toddle off to a nearby show where all the new games can be adjudged under the one roof.

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Till We Meet Again.....?

Sidah Russell



Well, after three-and-a-half years working here at Cash Box, I have finally been given the honour of writing the back page column. This is Jack's parting gift as I am leaving the magazine to travel around the world for a bit.

As any regular reader of this magazine will know, Cash Box is very much Jack's baby, so giving up the last page (and the final word for the month) was a very hard thing for him to do

... cutting the apron strings so to speak!

For that reason I feel compelled to keep up Jack's tradition of telling you about his monthly misfortunes, his family, his computers, his car ... basically anything that has nothing to do with the industry. (Mind you, here at the Cash Box office we are beginning to believe that the back page is the most read part of the magazine. I don't know how many people have pulled me up at trade shows just to ask if Jack's new car is giving him trouble, or if his lovely "bride" has left him yet.) By the way,

the answer to both questions is no.

So here's a couple of my favourite Jack Rodios stories...

1..... It's no secret that when he's in a socialising mood, Jack likes to have a drink or two. Many in the industry are mortified to discover that a man twice their age can not only drink more than they can, but can function properly

the next day as well. Jack's secrets are the facts that he needs very little sleep and that he's used to Australian beer which is much stronger than the American brews.

On one flight from the US to London, however, he discovered the attractions of Californian wine. Always one to get his money's worth out of any event, Jack consumed a large number of

bottles, too large a number in fact, and on arriving at Heathrow Airport, he was actually unable to walk properly, let alone behave himself. In his own words he was a "mess"

Picture this..... a rowdy Cash Box editor being transported on a luggage cart down to the immigration desks. He's seated up there

like the Queen herself, giving the "Royal wave" to all the lesser travellers who have to walk. Needless to say, customs officials were not impressed, but somehow he got through with the aid of Wells, his travelling mate, who was in slightly better condition

2..... Some years ago, after purchasing new computer equipment, Jack decided to install venetian blinds at the front of the office so would-be thieves couldn't see in.

Being an ex-carpenter, this was no challenge to his skills and he decided to do the job himself. He began by drilling the necessary holes in the aluminium window frames. Expecting the task to take around ten minutes, I was surprised when I came out of my office a quarter of an hour later to find Jack still standing on a table trying to drill his first hole.

He was leaning on the drill with his whole body, pushing with all his might and saying some things which really can't be repeated.

Still, the drill bit would not go in. The sweat was pouring off his brow when he finally threw the drill down in disgust, mumbling something about crappy equipment.

....it was only later, after a coffee to clear his head, and a cigarette, that he realised the drill was set on "reverse".

All jokes aside though, I would like to finish this column on a more serious note. Jack has been a wonderful boss over the past few years, and I would really like to thank him for taking on a young girl, fresh from uni, with no real experience in either journalism or the amusement machine industry. Jack, Jane and

Barb have become like family to me and I have the nagging feeling that I may just be leaving the best job I will ever have. I would also like to thank all the people in the industry who have kindly taken the time to explain things to me over the years - I have always found everyone in this business to be both helpful and friendly.

In my time with Cash Box I have seen the magazine go from a black and white Australian publication, to a full colour international magazine with twice the number of pages and at least ten times the circulation size. Throughout all the changes however, Cash Box has always had that special "Jack Rodios" stamp, so for this reason, I have left a bit of space at the bottom of this column. I know Jack will not be able to help himself - he is the consummate editor and he always has to have the last word!

Those of you who have met Sidah will have some understanding of what it's like for us to be losing her, we are like a family here, and I have considered Sid a sort of extra daughter for some time, we're all going to miss her, but can understand her desire to travel at this time and she leaves with our love and very best wishes, maybe one day she'll be back, I certainly hope so.

Jack R

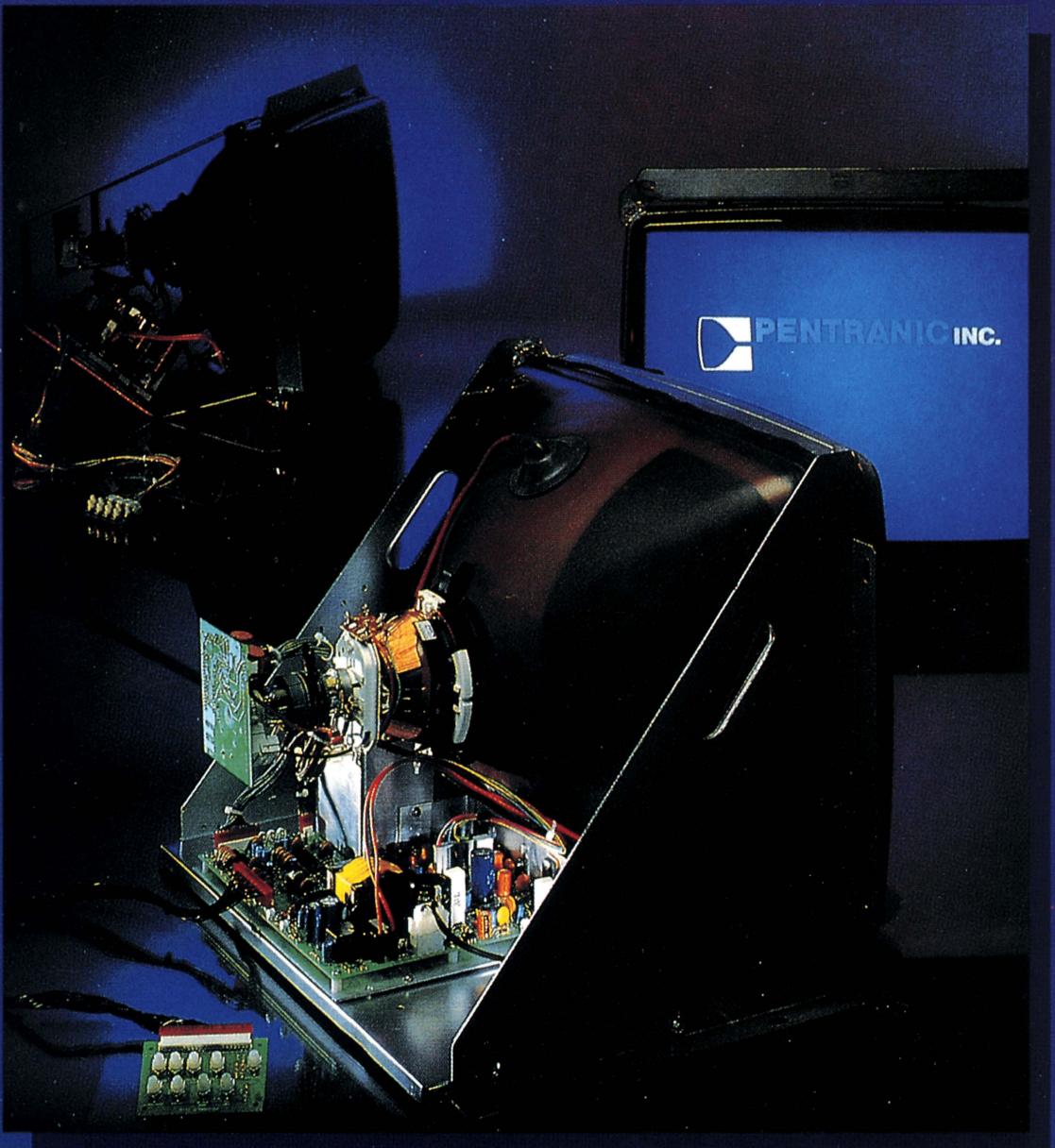
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